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WHO DIED ON THE 3RD OF FEBRUARY 1832, IN THE 78TH YEAR OF HIS AGE.
AND THE 47TH OF HIS SERVICES AS RECTOR OF THIS PARISH.

*Monument to George Crabbe in Trowbridge Parish Church*

# SELECTIONS

FROM

# THE POEMS OF

# GEORGE CRABBE

*WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES*

By ANTHONY DEANE

*WITH A FRONTISPIECE*

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# INTRODUCTION

"A POET of humble life, happily described as 'a Pope in worsted stockings.'" Such is the description of Crabbe which every student of "English Literature" cram books has by heart, and until lately it was almost all that nine out of ten readers could tell you about him. There was a University Extensionist, indeed, who went further and fared worse, by adding a gloss upon Horace Smith's not very brilliant epigram. "Mr Crabbe was a clergyman," she wrote, "who earned the name of 'a Pope in worsted stockings' by reason of his eccentric dress and his High Church views." Of late a decidedly increased interest has been shown in Crabbe and his writings. "I must think my old Crabbe will come up again, though never to be popular"—so, in a letter to Archbishop Trench, wrote Edward Fitzgerald, and it seems as if the prophecy were in a fair way to be fulfilled. Quite popular Crabbe is not likely to become; his are not the

rhymes for the reciter to get by heart, or for the young lady to copy into her album. But from his lifetime onwards he never lacked a band of faithful adherents. There must be something of more than average worth in verse which at different times has gained the enthusiastic praise of—to name but a few—Dr Johnson, Byron, Scott, Wordsworth, Jeffrey, Miss Austen, Cardinal Newman, Lord Tennyson and Mr Swinburne. To be sure, the reasons of this common taste have been various enough. Miss Austen thought him an ideal husband: "I could fancy myself Mrs Crabbe," she said—and an odd marriage it would have been! Byron eulogized Crabbe in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*:—

"There be, who say in these enlightened days
That splendid lies are all the poet's praise,
That strained invention, ever on the wing,
Alone impels the modern bard to sing;
'Tis true, that all who rhyme—nay, all who write—
Shrink from that fatal word to genius—trite;
Yet Truth sometimes will lend her noblest fires
And decorate the verse herself inspires;
This fact in Virtue's name let Crabbe attest;
Though nature's sternest painter, yet the best."

All which, however, meant little more than that Byron welcomed Crabbe as an upholder of the "classical" traditions against the Lake school.

He confesses almost as much in a letter to Thomas Moore (February 2, 1818), wherein he pronounces Crabbe to be "the father of modern poesy," because he clings to the Augustan mode, with its pompous decasyllabics and its strained antitheses. The same motive was the source of Jeffrey's rather extravagant praise. That he honestly admired Crabbe's work we need not doubt, but we may suspect that his eulogies would have been much less fervid had not to praise Crabbe been, according to the canons of contemporary criticism, to depreciate Wordsworth. So, again, in the *Noctes Ambrosianæ* (September, 1825) we find "Christopher North" asserting that "Crabbe, with all his defects, stands immeasurably above Wordsworth"—a verdict not endorsed by a later generation. The art of English poetry had come at this date to the parting of the ways, in regard to manner as well as matter. No wonder that the Conservatives, the staunch defenders of the threatened classical stronghold, hailed Crabbe as their champion. "How foolish this cry for simplicity," they urged, "how insane this demand for new and unconventional rhythms. You aim at truth, you say; you want fidelity to nature, and pictures of things as they are. Well, here is a poet who can give them to you. Does he think it needful to write in feeble little stanzas or blank verse?

Not a bit of it! Here are poems which for unflinching realism put your Wordsworth to shame—and yet he is able to do this without departing in the least from classical traditions. Look at his well-turned heroic couplets, look at his beautiful antitheses, almost worthy of Pope himself! Away with your rubbish about Wordsworth and his love of Nature!" And so, oddly enough, it happened that it was precisely Crabbe's worst defect—his strained and clumsy style—which gained for him the warmest praise from the poets and critics of his own age.

His later admirers have based their liking for him upon surer ground. Crabbe's poems, apart from their intrinsic merits, have a two-fold historical value. Technically, as has been suggested, they form a meeting-place between the old school of poetry and the new. They provide at the same time a vivid and striking picture of English rural life at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. And thus his work, as Sir Leslie Stephen[1] remarks, possesses "an abiding interest." But further it has a charm of its own, independent of its antiquarian and technical significance. For when all is said, Crabbe at his best is a poet, not merely a writer of verse. His defects, to a modern eye, are obvious enough.

[1] Article "Crabbe," in *Dictionary of National Biography.*

There are his exasperating mannerisms, and what Mr W. J. Courthope [1] terms "his incurable want of taste." There is his fondness for dwelling exclusively upon the uglier side of human nature. In the *Imaginary Conversations* [2] W. S. Landor thus contrasts the poems of Crabbe and Young:—

"Crabbe wrote with a twopenny nail, and scratched rough truths and rogues' facts upon mud walls. Young moralised at a distance on some external appearances of the human heart; Crabbe entered it on all fours, and told the people what an ugly thing it is inside."

That of course is not fair criticism, or at any-rate not complete criticism, and yet there is truth in it. Crabbe at times did dwell almost with gusto upon ignoble themes and the most sordid aspects of life. And the *advocatus diaboli* would be able to point to many other blemishes in his work. The most faithful of Crabbe's admirers cannot deny their presence. Yet, none the less, he was a poet; not a great poet, but still—a poet. Between the great poet and the poet the distance may be considerable, but is as nothing in comparison with the gulf separating the poet from the most accomplished verse-writer. Under the former category Crabbe

[1] In *Ward's English Poets*, vol. iii.
[2] Conversation between Landor and Southey.

by his best work deserves to be placed; in reading it you feel—almost against your wish, so exasperating are his mannerisms—that here, like it or not, is the keen vision, the true touch, the authentic note. The man himself has been at incredible pains to conceal the fact — and yet, beyond doubt, a poet he is.

Before appraising his work further, it may be well to set down briefly the story of his life. The eldest of four sons, George Crabbe was born at Aldeburgh, in Suffolk, on the Christmas Eve of 1754. In this small seaside place his father held the office of "saltmaster," or collector of the salt-dues, and was part-owner of a fishing boat. He seems to have been a man of little education and less refinement, and yet with a certain fondness for reading, from which, in a very odd way, his son derived his first taste for verse. The saltmaster beguiled his leisure with *Martin's Philosophical Magazine*, a publication containing each month a "poet's corner" on its last page. One may guess that the rhymes printed therein were not remarkable. At any-rate, they annoyed Mr Crabbe *père*, who, before sending the numbers to be bound at the end of the year, would tear out indignantly these poetical pages and throw them aside. They fell into the hands of his son, who read and re-read them with delight, and presently began to

attempt imitations, little songs and ballads, after the approved "poet's corner" style. This pursuit, needless to say, earned for him his father's hearty contempt. "That boy must be a fool," he remarked. "John and Bob and Will are all of some use about a boat; but what will that *thing* ever be good for?" However, he gave his son a fairly good education, sending him to school first at Bungay and then at Stowmarket. Thence George returned to Aldeburgh, and assisted his father in the warehouse; but he disliked the work, while for his native place he had a frank contempt. Its inhabitants he described in later years as:—

> "a wild, amphibious race,
> With sullen woe displayed on every face;
> Who far from civil arts and social fly,
> And scowl at strangers with suspicious eye."

None the less, Aldeburgh furnished him with his best themes; its memory remained with him throughout his life, and his verse is never better than when it describes that bleak, inhospitable spot and the "amphibious race" inhabiting it. A dull grey sky, grey waves breaking on a flat shore, a cluster of wretched buildings tenanted by mean and ignoble men and women—that is Crabbe's picture of Aldeburgh, and those who read his poems know with what force and vividness he paints it.

The saltmaster resolved at last to make a doctor of his son, and apprenticed him in 1768 to a surgeon at Wickham Brook. Three years later he was transferred to another surgeon at Woodbridge, where he first met Miss Sarah Elmy. This lady was twenty-one and Crabbe not yet eighteen, but he made serious love to her, and—which is more surprising—his addresses were taken seriously. The two became formally engaged, and remained constant to each other through no less than eleven years of waiting. In 1775[1] appeared Crabbe's first poem, with the unpromising title of "Inebrity." It was published, doubtless at the author's expense, by an Ipswich bookseller, and was read probably by not a dozen persons outside the narrow circle of Crabbe's personal acquaintances. In it the youthful poet played "the sedulous ape" to Pope, and contrived to reproduce Pope's worst mannerisms with some success :—

"When in the vaulted arch Lucina gleams
And gaily dances o'er the azure streams,
On silent ether when a trembling sound
Reverberates, and wildly floats around,
Breaking through trackless space upon the ear—
Conclude the Bacchanalian rustic near ;
O'er hills and vales the jovial savage reels,
Fire in his head, and frenzy at his heels."

[1] Mr T. E. Kebbel, in his *Life of Crabbe*, puts the date of its appearance a year earlier.

Most young poets have written lines in this form early in their career, though few have chosen such a subject. In these days most of them recover from Pope, as they do from measles. The *virus* was stronger in the last years of the eighteenth century, and under Pope's influence Crabbe remained to the end—though the symptoms became less acute than they are in the lines just cited.

The next few years of Crabbe's life were not very eventful. He returned to the uncongenial work in his father's warehouse, he studied medicine for eight months in London, then he became assistant to a surgeon in Aldeburgh, and on the retirement of this gentleman began to practise on his own account. But his heart was not in his work, and his patients were few indeed. At last, when he was twenty-five years old, he did what so many a literary aspirant has done before and since. "I made up my mind," in his own words, "to go to London and venture all." With a box of clothes, a case of surgical instruments, and £3 (borrowed from a stranger) in his pocket, he put himself on board a trading ship, and arrived in London in the spring of 1780. Thereupon he set to work with feverish haste to produce the poems, essays, and treatises which were to take the town by storm.

Alas! The capture of London is less easy than the literary aspirant imagines it. Crabbe went through the familiar, weary round; he sought for patrons, he interviewed publishers, he copied out his poems in his best handwriting—and the result was failure; failure absolute and unrelieved. Only one poem, "The Candidate," found its way into print, and immediately after its publication the publisher who had brought it out became a bankrupt—an impending fate from which his last venture was not likely to save him, for "The Candidate" is an uncommonly dull and prosy performance. In 1781 Crabbe was at the end of his tether. He had no money, he was about to be arrested for a debt of £14, not a publisher would look at his poems. He had written begging letters to Lord Thurlow, Lord Shelburn and Lord North; in each case without result. Suddenly it occurred to him to write another epistle of the same kind to Edmund Burke. In such a request Burke would see nothing strange. To modern ears Crabbe's letter seems odious, with its fulsome compliments, its servile grovellings, its abject appeals *ad misericordiam*. Of such, however, was the profession of letters in the eighteenth century. And Crabbe's appeal had its effect. From the day Burke read it, together with the accompanying verses, he was a made man.

Burke paid Dodsley, the publisher, to produce "The Library," provided for Crabbe's immediate needs, and introduced him to Fox and Sir Joshua Reynolds—the latter of whom made him known to Dr Johnson. Lord Thurlow, too, soon apologised for his neglect of the poet's earlier begging letter, handed him a banknote for £100, and advised him to take Holy Orders. What real vocation Crabbe had for the ministry is a point perhaps into which it is best not to inquire too closely. And if his clerical duties weighed but lightly upon him, if he was content to live for thirteen years in Suffolk while holding simultaneously livings in Lincolnshire and Leicestershire; if, as his son frankly admitted was the case, his "convivial habits"—in other words, his fondness for the bottle—sometimes brought him into trouble, his moral code was not more lax than that which generally obtained among the clergy of his age.

His first curacy was in his native town of Aldeburgh. He had left it as an almost penniless ne'er-do-weel, he returned to it as an ordained clergyman, as a recognised poet, and as the *protégé* of some of the greatest men of the day. One of his biographers [1] emphasises

[1] A. C. Cunningham. Introduction to a (piratical?) edition of Crabbe's poems, published *circ.* 1850 by Daly, London.

the contrast in a manner so deliciously bombastic that it deserves to be quoted :—

"How pure, how gratifying, how noble must have been the sentiments of conscious, successful and consecrated rectitude, to the once poor, abandoned, profitless exile, on first re-entering the home, the haunts, and the threshold, which had last seen him so as an honoured and honourable man ! "

Aldeburgh, however, did not welcome him. The prudent Miss Elmy declined to marry him until he had obtained a living, and after three months in his curacy he became chaplain to the Duke of Rutland, through the influence of Burke, and took up his residence in Belvoir Castle. There he completed and revised "The Village," a portion of which had been sent with his letter of appeal to Burke, and had gained that statesman's warm approval. When the MS. was complete, Crabbe induced Sir Joshua Reynolds to submit it to the great Dr Johnson, who pronounced it "original, vigorous, and elegant," while he suggested some emendations which Crabbe had the tact to adopt. "The Village" was published in May 1783, and proved a striking success. It marked a great advance upon its writer's earlier efforts, and indeed contained some of the poet's happiest lines. As a piece of word-painting, the description of the

sea in calm and storm is a really fine piece of work. And Crabbe's protest against the conventional rural scenes of romantic verse, with its skies inevitably "azure," its brooks as certainly "pearly," and its nymphs and shepherds so utterly unlike reality, struck the reading public well-nigh with the violence of a blow. No doubt Crabbe went too far to the other extreme. Village life was never so ideal as Goldsmith painted it, but it was never so gloomy as in Crabbe's pictures. The scenes of squalor which he depicts with Dutch minuteness are true enough, but they are not the whole truth. To other scenes of a more cheerful character he is resolutely blind; he leaves the impression with his readers that there are no other scenes, that there are none of those bright, serene and prosperous homes which, then as now, were common enough in British rural life. But there is no denying his vigour or his power of reproducing details with startling fidelity—and of doing this, moreover, within the cramped limits of the most formal heroic verse.

The success of "The Village" justified Crabbe's marriage, and his eleven years' engagement to Miss Elmy ended happily at last. For a time they lived in Belvoir Castle, and later at Stathern. In 1785, two years after "The Village," another poem was published called

"The Newspaper," which was widely praised, but is greatly inferior to the earlier work. Perhaps Crabbe himself had some inkling of this; at any rate, he did not publish another line of verse for no less than twenty-two years. He did not cease to write, but destroyed all the results in yearly "incremations," as he termed them. The practice seems not altogether undeserving of imitation by writers of verse generally.

Over these twenty-two years then, since our concern is rather with the literary than the clerical career of Crabbe, we may pass quickly. The Duke of Rutland died in 1787, when Crabbe was appointed to the livings of West Allington in Lincolnshire and Muston in Leicestershire. For a few years he lived in Muston, but, as has been mentioned above, preferred to make his home in his beloved Suffolk, and was an absentee from his parishes for thirteen years, during which period he lived in succession at Parham, Glemham and Rendham. Here he collected butterflies and ferns, wrote (and destroyed) a treatise on Botany, finished no less than three novels, which all found their way to the annual bonfire—in fact, "did nothing in particular, and did it very well." In 1805 an unfeeling bishop suggested that Crabbe should reside in Muston, his Leicestershire living.

His remarkable reply was that he was actually holding at this time two curacies in Suffolk, besides the Lincolnshire and Leicestershire benefices. The bishop, however, was inexorable. Crabbe caused his influential friends to intercede for him, but in vain. So, after thirteen years of absenteeism, he returned to Muston, and was exceedingly annoyed to find that a flourishing Wesleyan mission had been established in his absence. Perhaps uncomfortably aware that its presence was the result of his own neglect, he abused his parishioners roundly. It is not altogether surprising that when, eight years later, he took his final departure, the people of Muston rang the church bells for joy. So great an authority as Mr W. H. Hutton has extolled Crabbe as a parish priest.[1] "From the first he was content to take small cures." True enough, but surely, with four posts held simultaneously, they made up in quantity what they lacked in (financial) quality. "What Dean Church wrote of John Keble in his little Gloucestershire curacies," adds Mr Hutton, "might be said of Crabbe in Suffolk and Leicestershire," a really astonishing remark. In the last years of his life Crabbe did undertake some spiritual and pastoral work among his

[1] In his article, "Crabbe as a Parish Priest." *The Guardian*, August 6, 1902.

Trowbridge parishioners. Before that date there is little indication that he regarded his benefices in any other light than as convenient sources of income.

Crabbe returned to Muston, as has been mentioned, in 1805. Two years later he broke his long silence by publishing a volume containing "The Parish Register," "Sir Eustace Grey," and five less notable poems. "The Parish Register" had been read in manuscript by Fox shortly before his death, and had earned his enthusiastic praise. And some of the character sketches contained in it are masterpieces in their way, while its tone in describing real life is far less pessimistic than that of "The Village." Perhaps the tale of "Phœbe Dawson" marks its highest point of excellence. Fox asked on his death-bed that these lines should be read to him again, and, curiously enough, Walter Scott, when many years afterwards he too lay dying, made the same request. As Mr Birrell finely says, "To soothe the sorrow of the soothers of sorrow, to bring tears to the eyes and smiles to the cheeks of the lords of human smiles and tears, is no mean ministry, and it is Crabbe's." [1]

"The Parish Register" was a great success, largely owing to the fervid praise given to it by Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review*. In fact, this

[1] *Obiter Dicta*, 2nd series, p. 241.

volume more than restored to its author the reputation which his twenty-two years of silence had somewhat dimmed. And this time he was quicker to follow up his success. "The Borough" appeared in 1810, and "Tales" two years later. (The latter volume must not be confused with "Tales of the Hall," issued in 1819, or the "Posthumous Tales" of 1834). In "The Borough" Crabbe reached perhaps his highest point. Some of his admirers prefer the "Tales of the Hall," notably Edward Fitzgerald, who, referring to Horace Smith's epigram, wrote that "it is his 'Tales of the Hall' which discover him in silk stockings."[1] Those tales may have a larger share of dramatic interest, but they are vastly inferior in *technique*. Crabbe, like other writers, took less pains with his work when his reputation had been made; he did not polish his couplets, he was less careful of his rhymes. A good many of the scenes in "The Borough" are disagreeable enough, but their power is tremendous. Most famous of all is the description of the condemned felon in his cell, known to many who have read nothing else by its author.

In the year following the publication of the "Tales," Crabbe lost his devoted wife, and was himself dangerously ill. On his recovery he was

[1] Letter to Fanny Kemble, November 17, 1874.

offered and accepted the living of Trowbridge, in Wiltshire. He complained, however, that the emoluments were less than he had expected, and was therefore allowed to hold at the same time another living in Leicestershire, that of Croxton. Having thus brought up his income to £800—independent of the considerable sums earned by his books—he moved with his two sons from Muston to Trowbridge in the spring of 1814.

Here an opportunity soon presented itself of making new friends among the most celebrated personages of the day. At Lord Lansdowne's house he met Rogers, then at the height of his fame; Rogers invited him to London, and thereafter he went up to town every year for "the season"; he became a familiar figure at Holland House, and was a leading literary lion —in an age when literary lions were more valued than they are to-day. His diary kept during his visits to town shows him hastening from one festivity to another, from morning to night, for days and weeks together. And indeed he was an interesting figure. He had known Johnson and Boswell, Reynolds and Burke; now he was in the age of Byron, Moore, Rogers and Scott. Byron he never met, but in his life of that poet, Moore mentions [1] that the two were once, without being aware of it, in the same inn

[1] *Life and Letters of Lord Byron*, p. 77.

together for a day or two. (One cannot help wondering what each would have thought of the other!) But despite his social engagements Crabbe, that Trollope of verse, resolutely turned out his thirty lines *per diem*—neither more nor less. By 1819 his "Tales of the Hall" were ready for publication, and Murray paid him £3000 for them together with the copyrights of his earlier works. Crabbe refused to place the draft in a bank; he must carry it home to Trowbridge for his son John to see.

"The Tales of the Hall" have been adjudged by various staunch admirers of Crabbe—including Jeffrey, Edward Fitzgerald and Cardinal Newman—to be his best work. But many of them needed revision, others were unworthy a place in the collection. Those laudable "incremations," one suspects, were made no longer; else had the "Tales of the Hall" been more consistently good. And yet how excellent some of them are! How clear-cut are many of the portraits, how vivid the descriptions of sea and land! Crabbe was sixty-five when this book appeared, but it is full of pictures drawn from his early days at Aldeburgh, and one of the two principal characters is himself, in a transparent disguise.

After the "Tales of the Hall" of 1819, no more of Crabbe's verse was published before his

death in 1832. He still wrote, however, and some of the "Posthumous Tales" have considerable merit and vigour, though none of them attain to the level of the best of the "Tales of the Hall." Trowbridge continued to be his home, and Crabbe's closing years were spent in much happier relations with his parishioners than previously had been the case. He grew less domineering and hot-tempered, he ceased to abuse violently those who differed from him on religious points, and his own life became sweeter and more spiritual. For the first time he brought sympathy to his people, and for the first time therefore he received sympathy from them. As old age and infirmity yearly diminished the length of his London "season" and visits to fashionable friends, it caused him to spend more time in his parish and to fulfil those duties as a clergyman which, as a man of letters pure and simple, he hitherto had neglected so consistently. The loss of his wife was made good, so far as it could be, by the devoted care and affection of his son George, who, being now in Holy Orders, was able to help him in his ministerial work.

In 1822 Crabbe travelled to Edinburgh, on a visit to Sir Walter Scott, who had been a fervent admirer of his verse since the appearance of "The Borough," and had even tried to

imitate it.[1] Crabbe's astonishment at Scotch habits and customs seems to have been considerable: to find within the limits of Britain men wearing a strange dress and speaking a strange tongue filled him with surprise. One morning, as Lockhart tells us, he came down to breakfast and found some Highland gentlemen waiting for Sir Walter. Foreigners of some kind they must be, he concluded, and the only foreign language with which he had any acquaintance—and not much with that—was French. In stumbling French, accordingly, he harangued the bewildered chieftains. The mutual embarrassment was becoming acute when Scott entered the room and explained matters. The Highlandmen, naturally enough, had supposed Crabbe to be a slightly demented French abbé.

In 1825 he went to London for his last "season," and enjoyed it thoroughly. "If my walks are not so long," he writes from Hampstead, "they are more frequent. I have seen many things and many people: have seen Mr Southey and Mr Wordsworth; have been some days with Mr Rogers; and at last have been at the Athenæum, and purpose to visit the Royal Institution; and have been to Richmond in a steam-boat; seen, also, the picture galleries and some other exhibitions"—a record credit-

[1] In "The Poacher."

able enough to an old gentleman in his seventy-first year! Moreover, although this was the last of his London visits, he was able for some years later to take holidays of a less exciting kind. Often he stayed with his eldest son John, at this time curate of Pucklechurch; this was only some twenty miles from Trowbridge. Then in September 1830 we find him at Hastings, where he looked for the last time upon his well-loved sea. In October 1831 he was in Bristol at the date of the great riots in that town; half a century earlier he had witnessed the Gordon riots in London. On a Sunday in November he preached twice at Pucklechurch. Returning home to Trowbridge, he grew gradually weaker, and passed peacefully away, being in the seventy-eighth year of his age, on the 3rd of February 1832. His loss was sincerely lamented by the people of Trowbridge, and they erected a monument to him in the parish church, a photograph of which forms the frontispiece to this volume.[1]

[1] This monument, in marble, was executed by the sculptor Baillie, and placed in the church in August 1833. A few days before his death Crabbe's face, his son tells us, "lighted up with indescribable satisfaction of joy, as he appeared to be looking at something before him, and uttered these words: 'That blessed Book!'" No doubt the sculptor utilised this incident in making his design.

The photograph of the monument was specially taken

Crabbe's poetical work falls, obviously enough, into three divisions of time. The first is that of "The Candidate" (1780), "The Library" (1781), "The Village" (1783), and "The Newspaper" (1785). The second is that of "The Borough" (1810) and "Tales" (1812). The third is that of "Tales of the Hall" (1819). But the attempt of some critics to discover three different styles in his work to correspond with these three periods is not altogether successful. Indeed, there is curiously little difference between the earliest of Crabbe's "manners" and the latest. His outlook on life became less morose as his own fortunes brightened. But this affected the matter of his verse rather than the manner. To the end he was faithful to his heroic couplets. They became less formal, perhaps; the mechanical antitheses are less frequent in the later poems; but this does not mean that Crabbe's love of formal verse was lessened, but merely the industry to make it formal. We may regret heartily that he did not make greater use of other metres. Purposely I have included in this volume a large proportion of the few things he wrote in stanza form, because they

for the Editor of this volume by Messrs Houlton, of Trowbridge, and is reproduced by their courteous permission.

show clearly enough that the faults of his style belong to the conventions he chose to adopt rather than to any inherent disabilities of his own. These other pieces are quite free from the exasperating mannerisms and artificialities which Crabbe evidently thought to be necessary so long as he was writing heroic couplets. These mannerisms are scarcely exaggerated by James Smith's parody in the *Rejected Addresses* :—

> " 'Tis sweet to view from half-past five to six,[1]
> Our long wax candles, with short cotton wicks,
> Touched by the lamplighter's Promethean art,
> Start into light, and make the lighter start,"

or,

> " Regain'd the felt, and felt what he regain'd,"

can easily be matched by veritable lines of Crabbe's ; *e.g.* :—

> " A quiet, simple man was Abel Keem,
> He meant no harm, nor did he often mean."

> " But from that day, the fatal day she spied
> The pride of Daniel, Daniel was her pride."

Even worse examples are plentiful enough ; and not a few readers are so annoyed by these

[1] " There is a little ill-nature—and, I take the liberty of adding, undeserved ill-nature—in their prefatory address ; but in their versification they have done me admirably. They are extraordinary men ; but it is easier to imitate style than to furnish matter." Such was Crabbe's own comment upon this parody.

contemptible tricks, that they never penetrate beneath them to Crabbe's better qualities. The truth is that he attempted to interpret nineteenth-century views of life in the terms of eighteenth-century verse; the wonder is not that he sometimes failed, but that he achieved so astonishing a proportion of success. It is not easy to paint a good picture; Crabbe's poems are a series of good pictures, minutely perfect and infinitely "telling." But it is still less easy to paint well if your hands are tightly bound before the brush is placed in them. Crabbe bound his own hands as tightly as possible, and yet his pictures live, and will live to all time. He will never have a wide public, but he will never lack a public of enthusiasts. People cannot be argued into a liking for Crabbe; you have the taste or you lack it. Yet it is hard to understand how any intelligent person can read Crabbe at his best without being almost overwhelmed by the tremendous force, the extraordinarily acute vision revealed behind those old-fashioned and inept methods of his. His worst, no doubt, was very bad indeed. And in the case of a writer at once so voluminous and so unequal, a volume of selections like the present has, I think, sufficient justification for its appearance.

The complete poetical works of Crabbe were published in 1834, with a long and admirable

biography by his son George. Of this, as well as of his notes, I have made full use, as indeed every subsequent writer on Crabbe is bound to do. I am also under an obligation to Mr T. E. Kebbel's excellent and discriminating *Life of Crabbe* (London, 1888). References to other authorities have been given in the footnotes. Canon Ainger's promised volume on Crabbe in the *English Men of Letters* series has not appeared, unfortunately, at the date when I write these words.

In making my selections from the poems, I have endeavoured to give adequate representation to each of Crabbe's volumes. Most of the extracts are of considerable length, for Crabbe is not an author who can be judged fairly by brief snippets. For example, it is essential that such a poem as "Lady Barbara" should be presented, as it is in these pages, in its entirety, if its dramatic power is to be rightly appreciated. I hope that this small volume may help towards gaining more readers for a poet who, with all his limitations, holds a distinct place in English literature, and holds it without a rival.

# SELECTIONS FROM THE POEMS OF GEORGE CRABBE

## RURAL LIFE

(*From "The Village"*)

FLED are those times, when, in harmonious strains,
The rustic poet praised his native plains:
No shepherds now, in smooth alternate verse,
Their country's beauty or their nymphs rehearse;
Yet still for these we frame the tender strain,
Still in our lays fond Corydons complain,
And shepherds' boys their amorous pains reveal,
The only pains, alas! they never feel.
On Mincio's banks, in Cæsar's bounteous reign,
If Tityrus found the Golden Age again,
Must sleepy bards the flattering dream prolong,
Mechanic echoes of the Mantuan song?
From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray,
Where Virgil, not where Fancy, leads the way?[1]

[1] These six lines are the result of Dr Johnson's

Yes, thus the Muses sing of happy swain,
Because the Muses never knew their pains:
They boast their peasants' pipes; but peasants now
Resign their pipes and plod behind the plough;
And few, amid the rural tribe, have time
To number syllables and play with rhyme;
Save honest Duck,[1] what son of verse could share
The poet's rapture and the peasant's care?
Or the great labours of the field degrade,
With the new peril of a poorer trade?

From this chief cause these idle praises spring,
That themes so easy few forbear to sing;
For no deep thought the trifling subjects ask;
To sing of shepherds is an easy task:
The happy youth assumes the common strain,
A nymph his mistress, and himself a swain;
With no sad scenes he clouds his tuneful prayer,
But all, to look like her, is painted fair.

I grant indeed that fields and flocks have charms
For him that grazes or for him that farms;
But when amid such pleasing scenes I trace
The poor laborious natives of the place,
And see the mid-day sun, with fervid ray,
On their bare heads and dewy temples play;

revision. (*Cf.* Introduction.) As originally written by Crabbe, they ran :—

"In fairer scenes, where peaceful pleasures spring,
Tityrus, the pride of Mantuan swains, might sing;
But charm'd by him, or smitten with his views
Shall modern poets court the Mantuan muse?
From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray
Where Fancy leads, or Virgil led the way?"

[1] A poetical farm-labourer, pensioned by Queen Caroline.

While some, with feebler heads and fainter hearts,
Deplore their fortune, yet sustain their parts—
Then shall I dare these real ills to hide
In tinsel trappings of poetic pride?
No; cast by Fortune on a frowning coast,
Which neither groves nor happy valleys boast;
Where other cares than those the Muse relates,
And other shepherds dwell with other mates;
By such examples taught, I paint the Cot,
As Truth will paint it, and as Bards will not:
Nor you, ye Poor, of lettered scorn complain,
To you the smoothest song is smooth in vain;
O'ercome by labour, and bowed down by time,
Feel you the barren flattery of a rhyme?
Can poets soothe you, when you pine for bread,
By winding myrtles round your ruined shed?
Can their light tales your weighty griefs o'er-
power,
Or glad with airy mirth the toilsome hour?
Lo! where the heath, with withering brake
grown o'er,
Lends the light turf that warms the neighbouring
poor;
From thence a length of burning sand appears,
Where the thin harvest waves its withered ears;
Rank weeds, that every art and care defy,
Reign o'er the land, and rob the blighted rye:
There thistles stretch their prickly arms afar,
And to the ragged infant threaten war;
There poppies nodding, mock the hope of toil;
There the blue bugloss paints the sterile soil;
Hardy and high, above the slender sheaf,
The slimy mallow waves her silky leaf;
O'er the young shoot the charlock throws a shade,

And clasping tares cling round the sickly blade ;
With mingled tints the rocky coasts abound,
And a sad splendour vainly shines around.
So looks the nymph whom wretched arts adorn,
Betrayed by man, then left for man to scorn ;
Whose cheek in vain assumes the mimic rose,
While her sad eyes the troubled breast disclose ;
Whose outward splendour is but folly's dress,
Exposing most, when most it gilds distress.
Here joyless roam a wild amphibious race,
With sullen woe displayed in every face ;
Who, far from civil arts and social fly,
And scowl at strangers with suspicious eye.
Here too the lawless merchant of the main
Draws from his plough the intoxicated swain ;
Want only claimed the labour of the day,
But vice now steals his nightly rest away.
Where are the swains, who, daily labour done,
With rural games played down the setting sun ;
Who struck with matchless force the bounding ball,
Or made the ponderous quoit obliquely fall ;
While some huge Ajax, terrible and strong,
Engaged some artful stripling of the throng,
And fell beneath him, foiled, while far around
Hoarse triumph rose, and rocks returned the sound ?
Where now are these ?—Beneath yon cliff they stand,
To show the freighted pinnace where to land ;
To load the ready steed with guilty haste,
To fly in terror o'er the pathless waste,
Or, when detected, in their straggling course,
To foil their foes by cunning or by force ;

Or, yielding part (which equal knaves demand),
To gain a lawless passport through the land.
Here, wandering long, amid these frowning fields,[1]
I sought the simple life that Nature yields;
Rapine and Wrong and Fear usurped her place,
And a bold, artful, surly, savage race;
Who, only skilled to take the finny tribe,
The yearly dinner, or septennial bribe,
Wait on the shore, and, as the waves run high,
On the tossed vessel bend their eager eye,
Which to their coast directs its venturous way;
Theirs, or the ocean's, miserable prey.
As on their neighbouring beach yon swallows stand,
And wait for favouring winds to leave the land;
While still for flight the ready wing is spread:
So waited I the favouring hour, and fled;
Fled from these shores where guilt and famine reign,
And cried, Ah! hapless they who still remain;
Who still remain to hear the ocean roar,
Whose greedy waves devour the lessening shore;
Till some fierce tide, with more imperious sway,
Sweeps the low hut and all it holds away;
When the sad tenant weeps from door to door;
And begs a poor protection from the poor!
But these are scenes where Nature's niggard hand
Gave a spare portion to the famished land;
Hers is the fault, if here mankind complain
Of fruitless toil and labour spent in vain;

[1] These are said to have been the lines which convinced Burke of Crabbe's powers.

But yet in other scenes more fair in view,
When plenty smiles—alas! she smiles for few—
And those who taste not, yet behold her store,
Are as the slaves that dig the golden ore—
The wealth around them makes them doubly poor.

Or will you deem them amply paid in health,
Labour's fair child, that languishes with wealth?
Go then! and see them rising with the sun,
Through a long course of daily toil to run;
See them beneath the dog-star's raging heat,
When the knees tremble and the temples beat;
Behold them, leaning on their scythes, look o'er
The labour past, and toils to come explore;
See them alternate suns and showers engage,
And hoard up aches and anguish for their age;
Through fens and marshy moors their steps pursue,
When their warm pores imbibe the evening dew;
Then own that labour may as fatal be
To these thy slaves, as thine excess to thee.

Amid this tribe too oft a manly pride
Strives in strong toil the fainting heart to hide;
There may you see the youth of slender frame
Contend with weakness, weariness, and shame;
Yet, urged along, and proudly loth to yield,
He strives to join his fellows of the field:
Till long-contending nature droops at last,
Declining health rejects his poor repast,
His cheerless spouse the coming danger sees,
And mutual murmurs urge the slow disease.

Yet grant them health, 'tis not for us to tell,
Though the head droops not, that the heart is well;

Or will you praise that homely, healthy fare,
Plenteous and plain, that happy peasants share?
Oh! trifle not with wants you cannot feel,
Nor mock the misery of a stinted meal;
Homely, not wholesome, plain, not plenteous, such
As you who praise would never deign to touch.
Ye gentle souls, who dream of rural ease,
Whom the smooth stream and smoother sonnet please;
Go! if the peaceful cot your praises share,
Go look within, and ask if peace be there;
If peace be his—that drooping weary sire,
Or theirs, that offspring round their feeble fire;
Or hers, that matron pale, whose trembling hand
Turns on the wretched hearth the expiring brand!

## PHŒBE DAWSON

(*From "The Parish Register: Marriages"*)

[1] Two summers since, I saw at Lammas Fair
The sweetest flower that ever blossomed there,
When *Phœbe Dawson* gaily crossed the Green,
In haste to see and happy to be seen:
Her air, her manners, all who saw admired;
Courteous though coy, and gentle though retired;

[1] This is the poem which both Fox and Scott desired to be read to them when on their death-beds.

The joy of youth and health her eyes displayed,
And ease of heart her every look conveyed;
A native skill her simple robes expressed,
As with untutored elegance she dressed;
The lads around admired so fair a sight,
And Phœbe felt, and felt she gave, delight.
Admirers soon of every age she gained,
Her beauty won them and her worth retained;
Envy itself could no contempt display,
They wish'd her well, whom yet they wished away.
Correct in thought, she judged a servant's place
Preserved a rustic beauty from disgrace;
But yet on Sunday-eve, in freedom's hour,
With secret joy she felt that beauty's power,
When some proud bliss upon the heart would steal,
That, poor or rich, a beauty still must feel.
At length the youth ordained to move her breast,
Before the swains with bolder spirit pressed;
With looks less timid made his passion known,
And pleased by manners most unlike her own;
Loud though in love, and confident though young;
Fierce in his air, and voluble of tongue;
By trade a tailor, though, in scorn of trade,
He served the Squire, and brushed the coat he made.
Yet now, would Phœbe her consent afford,
Her slave alone, again he'd mount the board;
With her should years of growing love be spent,
And growing wealth;—she sighed and looked consent.

Now, through the lane, up hill, and 'cross the green,
(Seen by but few, and blushing to be seen—
Dejected, thoughtful, anxious, and afraid,)
Led by the lover, walked the silent maid;
Slow through the meadows roved they, many a mile,
Toyed by each bank, and trifled at each stile;
Where, as he painted every blissful view,
And highly coloured what he strongly drew,
The pensive damsel, prone to tender fears,
Dimmed the false prospect with prophetic tears.
Thus passed the allotted hours, till lingering late,
The lover loitered at the master's gate;
There he pronounced adieu! and yet would stay,
Till chidden — soothed — entreated — forced away;
He would of coldness, though indulged, complain,
And oft retire, and oft return again;
When, if his teasing vexed her gentle mind,
The grief assumed, compelled her to be kind!
For he would proof of plighted kindness crave,
That she resented first, and then forgave;
And to his grief and penance yielded more
Than his presumption had required before.
Ah! fly temptation, youth; refrain! refrain!
Each yielding maid and each presuming swain!

Lo! now with red rent cloak and bonnet black,
And torn green gown loose hanging at her back,
One who an infant in her arms sustains,
And seems in patience striving with her pains;

Pinched are her looks, as one who pines for bread,
Whose cares are growing and whose hopes are fled;
Pale her parched lips, her heavy eyes sunk low,
And tears unnoticed from their channels flow;
Serene her manner, till some sudden pain
Frets the meek soul, and then she's calm again;—
Her broken pitcher to the pool she takes,
And every step with cautious terror makes;
For not alone that infant in her arms,
But nearer cause, her anxious soul alarms.
With water burthened, then she picks her way,
Slowly and cautious, in the clinging clay;
Till, in mid-green, she trusts a place unsound,
And deeply plunges in the adhesive ground;
Thence, but with pain, her slender foot she takes,
While hope the mind, as strength the frame, forsakes:
For when so full the cup of sorrow grows,
Add but a drop, it instantly o'erflows.
And now her path, but not her peace, she gains,
Safe from her task, but shivering with her pains;
Her home she reaches, open leaves the door,
And placing first her infant on the floor,
She bares her bosom to the wind, and sits,
And sobbing struggles with the rising fits:
In vain they come, she feels the inflating grief,
That shuts the swelling bosom from relief;
That speaks in feeble cries a soul distressed,
Or the sad laugh that cannot be repressed.

The neighbour-matron leaves her wheel and flies
With all the aid her poverty supplies;
Unfee'd, the calls of Nature she obeys,
Not led by profit, not allured by praise;
And waiting long, till these contentions cease,
She speaks of comfort, and departs in peace.
Friend of distress! the mourner feels thy aid;
She cannot pay thee, but thou wilt be paid.

But who this child of weakness, want, and care?
'Tis *Phœbe Dawson*, pride of Lammas Fair;
Who took her lover for his sparkling eyes,
Expressions warm, and love-inspiring lies:
Compassion first assailed her gentle heart,
For all his suffering, all his bosom's smart:
"And then his prayers! they would a savage move,
And win the coldest of the sex to love:"—
But ah! too soon his looks success declared,
Too late her loss the marriage-rite repaired;
The faithless flatterer then his vows forgot,
A captious tyrant or a noisy sot:
If present, railing, till he saw her pained;
If absent, spending what their labours gained;
Till that fair form in want and sickness pined,
And hope and comfort fled that gentle mind.
Then fly temptation, youth; resist, refrain!
Nor let me preach for ever and in vain!

## THE CONTENTED PEASANT

(*From "The Parish Register: Burials"*)

[1] Next to these ladies, but in nought allied,
A noble Peasant, *Isaac Ashford*, died.
Noble he was, contemning all things mean,
His truth unquestioned and his soul serene:
Of no man's presence Isaac felt afraid;
At no man's question Isaac looked dismayed:
Shame knew him not, he dreaded no disgrace;
Truth, simple truth, was written in his face:
Yet while the serious thought his soul approved,
Cheerful he seem'd, and gentleness he loved;
To bliss domestic he his heart resigned,
And, with the firmest, had the fondest mind:
Were others joyful, he looked smiling on,
And gave allowance where he needed none;
Good he refused with future ill to buy,
Nor knew a joy that caused reflection's sigh;
A friend to virtue, his unclouded breast
No envy stung, no jealousy distressed;
(Bane of the poor! it wounds their weaker mind,
To miss one favour, which their neighbours find:)
Yet far was he from stoic pride removed;
He felt humanely, and he warmly loved:
I marked his action, when his infant died,
And his old neighbour for offence was tried;

[1] "Isaac Ashford" was a portrait drawn of the parish-clerk at North Glemham.

The still tears, stealing down that furrowed
cheek,
Spoke pity, plainer than the tongue can speak.
If pride were his, 'twas not their vulgar pride,
Who, in their base contempt, the great deride;
Nor pride in learning,—though my Clerk agreed,
If fate should call him, Ashford might succeed;
Nor pride in rustic skill, although we knew
None his superior, and his equals few:—
But if that spirit in his soul had place,
It was the jealous pride that shuns disgrace;
A pride in honest fame, by virtue gained,
In sturdy boys to virtuous labours trained;
Pride in the power that guards his country's
coast,
And all that Englishmen enjoy and boast;
Pride in a life that slander's tongue defied,—
In fact a noble passion, misnamed Pride.

He had no party's rage, no sectary's whim;
Christian and countryman was all with him:
True to his church he came; no Sunday-shower
Kept him at home in that important hour;
Nor his firm feet could one persuading sect,
By the strong glare of their new light direct;—
"On hope, in mine own sober light, I gaze,
But should be blind, and lose it, in your blaze."

In times severe, when many a sturdy swain
Felt it his pride, his comfort, to complain;
Isaac their wants would soothe, his own would
hide,
And feel in that his comfort and his pride.

At length he found, when seventy years were
run,
His strength departed, and his labour done;

When he, save honest fame, retained no more,
But lost his wife, and saw his children poor:
'Twas then, a spark of—say not discontent—
Struck on his mind, and thus he gave it vent:—
"Kind are your laws, ('tis not to be denied,)
That in yon House, for ruined age, provide,
And they are just;—when young we give you all,
And for assistance in our weakness call.—
Why then this proud reluctance to be fed,
To join your poor, and eat the parish-bread?
But yet I linger, loth with him to feed,
Who gains his plenty by the sons of need;
He who, by contract, all your paupers took,
And gauges stomachs with an anxious look:
On some old master I could well depend;
See him with joy and thank him as a friend;
But ill on him who doles the day's supply,
And counts our chances who at night may die:
Yet help me, Heaven! and let me not complain
Of what I suffer, but my fate sustain."
Such were his thoughts, and so resigned he grew;
Daily he placed the Workhouse in his view!
But came not there, for sudden was his fate,
He dropped, expiring, at his cottage-gate.
I feel his absence in the hours of prayer,
And view his seat, and sigh for Isaac there:
I see no more those white locks thinly spread
Round the bald polish of that honoured head;
No more that awful glance on playful wight,
Compelled to kneel and tremble at the sight,
To fold his fingers, all in dread the while,
Till Mister Ashford softened to a smile;

No more that meek and suppliant look in prayer,
Nor the pure faith (to give it force), are there : —
But he is blest, and I lament no more
A wise good man contented to be poor.

## SIR EUSTACE GREY[1]

*Scene*—A Madhouse.

*Persons*—VISITOR, PHYSICIAN and PATIENT.

VISITOR.

I'LL know no more ;—the heart is torn
By views of woe we cannot heal ;
Long shall I see these things forlorn,
And oft again their griefs shall feel,
As each upon the mind shall steal ;
That wan projector's mystic style,
That lumpish idiot leering by,
That peevish idler's ceaseless wile,
And that poor maiden's half-formed smile,
While struggling for the full-drawn sigh !—
I'll know no more.

PHYSICIAN.

Yes, turn again ;
Then speed to happier scenes thy way,

[1] This poem was written during a great snowstorm. Crabbe declared that he wrote more easily when snow was falling than at any other time.

When thou hast viewed, what yet remain,
The ruins of Sir Eustace Grey,
The sport of madness, misery's prey:
But he will no historian need,
His cares, his crimes, will he display,
And show (as one from frenzy freed)
The proud lost mind, the rash-done deed.

That cell to him is Greyling Hall:—
Approach; he'll bid thee welcome there;
Will sometimes for his servant call,
And sometimes point the vacant chair;
He can, with free and easy air,
Appear attentive and polite;
Can veil his woes in manners fair,
And pity with respect excite.

PATIENT.

Who comes?—Approach!—'tis kindly done:—
My learned physician, and a friend,
Their pleasures quit, to visit one
Who cannot to their ease attend,
Nor joys bestow, nor comforts lend,
As when I lived so blest, so well,
And dreamt not I must soon contend
With those malignant powers of hell.

PHYSICIAN.

Less warmth, Sir Eustace, or we go.

PATIENT.

See! I am calm as infant-love,
A very child, but one of woe,

Whom you should pity, not reprove:—
But men at ease, who never strove
With passions wild, will calmly show
How soon we may their ills remove,
And masters of their madness grow.

Some twenty years, I think, are gone,—
(Time flies, I know not how, away,)
The sun upon no happier shone,
Nor prouder man, than Eustace Grey.
Ask where you would, and all would say,
The man admired and praised of all,
By rich and poor, by grave and gay,
Was the young lord of Greyling Hall.

Yes! I had youth and rosy health;
Was nobly formed, as man might be;
For sickness, then, of all my wealth,
I never gave a single fee:
The ladies fair, the maidens free,
Were all accustomed then to say,
Who would a handsome figure see
Should look upon Sir Eustace Grey.

He had a frank and pleasant look,
A cheerful eye and accent bland;
His very speech and manner spoke
The generous heart, the open hand;
About him all was gay or grand,
He had the praise of great and small;
He bought, improved, projected, planned,
And reigned a prince at Greyling Hall.

My lady!—she was all we love;
All praise (to speak her worth) is faint;
Her manners showed the yielding dove,
Her morals, the seraphic saint:
She never breathed nor looked complaint;
No equal upon earth had she:—
Now, what is this fair thing I paint?
Alas! as all that live shall be.

There was, beside, a gallant youth,
And him my bosom's friend I had;—
Oh! I was rich in very truth,
It made me proud—it made me mad!—
Yes, I was lost—but there was cause!—
Where stood my tale?—I cannot find—
But I had all mankind's applause,
And all the smiles of womankind.

There were two cherub-things beside,
A gracious girl, a glorious boy;
Yet more to swell my full-blown pride,
To varnish higher my fading joy,
Pleasures were ours without alloy,
Nay, Paradise,—till my frail Eve
Our bliss was tempted to destroy—
Deceived, and fated to deceive.

But I deserved;—for all that time,
When I was loved, admired, caressed,
There was within, each secret crime,
Unfelt, uncancelled, unconfessed:
I never then my God addressed,
In grateful praise or humble prayer;
And if His Word was not my jest—
(Dread thought!) it never was my care.

I doubted:—fool I was to doubt!
If that all-piercing eye could see,—
If He who looks all worlds throughout,
Would so minute and careful be
As to perceive and punish me:—
With man I would be great and high,
But with my God so lost, that He,
In His large view, should pass me by.

Thus blest with children, friend, and wife,
Blest far beyond the vulgar lot;
Of all that gladdens human life,
Where was the good that I had not?
But my vile heart had sinful spot,
And Heaven beheld its deepening stain;
Eternal justice I forgot,
And mercy sought not to obtain.

Come near—I'll softly speak the rest!—
Alas! 'tis known to all the crowd,
Her guilty love was all confessed;
And his, who so much truth avowed,
My faithless friend's.—In pleasure proud
I sat, when these cursed tidings came;
Their guilt, their flight was told aloud,
And Envy smiled to hear my shame!

I call'd on Vengeance; at the word
She came:—Can I the deed forget?
I held the sword—the accursed sword
The blood of his false heart made wet;
And that fair victim paid her debt,
She pined, she died, she loathed to live;—
I saw her dying—see her yet:
Fair fallen thing! my rage forgive!

Those cherubs still, my life to bless,
Were left; could I my fears remove,
Sad fears that checked each fond caress,
And poisoned all parental love?
Yet that with jealous feelings strove,
And would at last have won my will,
Had I not, wretch! been doom'd to prove
The extremes of mortal good and ill.

In youth! health! joy! in beauty's pride!
They drooped—as flowers when blighted bow;
The dire infection came:—they died,
And I was cursed—as I am now;—
Nay, frown not, angry friend,—allow
That I was deeply, sorely tried;
Hear then, and you must wonder how
I could such storms and strifes abide.

Storms!—not that clouds embattled make,
When they afflict this earthly globe;
But such as with their terrors shake
Man's breast, and to the bottom probe;
They make the hypocrite disrobe,
They try us all, if false or true;
For this one Devil had power on Job;
And I was long the slave of two.

PHYSICIAN.

Peace, peace, my friend; these subjects fly;
Collect thy thoughts—go calmly on.—

PATIENT.

And shall I then the fact deny?
I was,—thou know'st,—I was begone.

Like him [1] who filled the eastern throne,
To whom the Watcher [2] cried aloud;
That royal wretch of Babylon,
Who was so guilty and so proud.

Like him, with haughty, stubborn mind,
I, in my state, my comforts sought;
Delight and praise I hoped to find,
In what I builded, planted, bought!
Oh, arrogance! by misery taught—
Soon came a voice! I felt it come;
"Full be his cup, with evil fraught,
Demons his guides, and death his doom!"

Then was I cast from out my state;
Two fiends of darkness led my way;
They waked me early, watched me late,
My dread by night, my plague by day!
Oh! I was made their sport, their play,
Through many a stormy troubled year;
And how they used their passive prey
Is sad to tell:—but you shall hear.

And first before they sent me forth,
Through this unpitying world to run,
They robbed Sir Eustace of his worth,
Lands, manors, lordships, every one;
So was that gracious man undone,
Was spurned as vile, was scorned as poor,
Whom every former friend would shun,
And menials drove from every door.

[1] Nebuchadnezzar.
[2] Dan. iv. 23.

Then those ill-favoured Ones, whom none
But my unhappy eyes could view,
Led me, with wild emotion, on,
And, with resistless terror, drew.
Through lands we fled, o'er seas we flew,
And halted on a boundless plain;
Where nothing fed, nor breathed, nor grew,
But silence ruled the still domain.

Upon that boundless plain, below,
The setting sun's last rays were shed,
And gave a mild and sober glow,
Where all were still, asleep, or dead;
Vast ruins in the midst were spread,
Pillars and pediments sublime,
Where the grey moss had formed a bed,
And clothed the crumbling spoils of time.

There was I fixed, I know not how,
Condemned for untold years to stay:
Yet years were not;—one dreadful *Now*
Endured no change of night or day;
The same mild evening's sleeping ray
Shone softly solemn and serene,
And all that time I gazed away,
The setting sun's sad rays were seen.

At length a moment's sleep stole on,—
Again came my commissioned foes;
Again through sea and land we're gone,
No peace, no respite, no repose:
Above the dark broad sea we rose,
We ran through bleak and frozen land;
I had no strength their strength to oppose,
An infant in a giant's hand.

They placed me where those streamers play,
Those nimble beams of brilliant light;
It would the stoutest heart dismay,
To see, to feel, that dreadful sight:
So swift, so pure, so cold, so bright,
They pierced my frame with icy wound;
And all that half-year's polar night,
Those dancing streamers wrapped me round.

Slowly that darkness passed away,
When down upon the earth I fell,—
Some hurried sleep was mine by day;
But, soon as tolled the evening bell,
They forced me on, where ever dwell
Far-distant men in cities fair,
Cities of whom no travellers tell,
Nor feet but mine were wanderers there.

Their watchmen stare, and stand aghast,
As on we hurry through the dark;
The watch-light blinks as we go past,
The watch-dog shrinks and fears to bark;
The watch-tower's bell sounds shrill; and, hark
The free wind blows—we've left the town—
A wide sepulchral ground I mark,
And on a tombstone place me down.

What monuments of mighty dead!
What tombs of various kind are found!
And stones erect their shadows shed
On humble graves, with wickers bound,
Some risen fresh, above the ground,
Some level with the native clay:
What sleeping millions wait the sound,
"Arise, ye dead, and come away!"

Alas! they stay not for that call;
Spare me this woe! ye demons, spare!—
They come! the shrouded shadows all,—
'Tis more than mortal brain can bear;
Rustling they rise, they sternly glare
At man upheld by vital breath;
Who, led by wicked fiends, should dare
To join the shadowy troops of death!

Yes, I have felt all man can feel,
Till he shall pay his nature's debt;
Ills that no hope has strength to heal,
No mind the comfort to forget:
Whatever cares the heart can fret,
The spirits wear, the temper gall,
Woe, want, dread, anguish, all beset
My sinful soul!—together all!

Those fiends upon a shaking fen
Fixed me, in dark tempestuous night;
There never trod the foot of men,
There flocked the fowl in wintry flight;
There danced the moor's deceitful light
Above the pool where sedges grow;
And when the morning-sun shone bright,
It shone upon a field of snow.

They hung me on a bough so small,
The rook could build her nest no higher;
They fixed me on the trembling ball
That crowns the steeple's quivering spire;
They set me where the seas retire,
But drown with their returning tide;
And made me flee the mountain's fire,
When rolling from its burning side.

I've hung upon the ridgy steep
Of cliffs, and held the rambling brier;
I've plunged below the billowy deep,
Where air was sent me to respire;
I've been where hungry wolves retire;
And (to complete my woes) I've ran
Where Bedlam's crazy crew conspire
Against the life of reasoning man.

I've furled in storms the flapping sail,
By hanging from the topmast-head;
I've served the vilest slaves in jail,
And picked the dunghill's spoil for bread;
I've made the badger's hole my bed;
I've wandered with a gipsy crew;
I've dreaded all the guilty dread,
And done what they would fear to do.

On sand, where ebbs and flows the flood,
Midway they placed and bade me die;
Propped on my staff, I stoutly stood
When the swift waves came rolling by;
And high they rose, and still more high,
Till my lips drank the bitter brine;
I sobbed convulsed, then cast mine eye,
And saw the tide's re-flowing sign.

And then my dreams were such as nought
Could yield but my unhappy case;
I've been of thousand devils caught,
And thrust into that horrid place
Where reign dismay, despair, disgrace;
Furies with iron fangs were there,
To torture that accursed race
Doomed to dismay, disgrace, despair.

Harmless I was; yet hunted down
For treasons, to my soul unfit;
I've been pursued through many a town,
For crimes that petty knaves commit;
I've been adjudged to have lost my wit,
Because I preached so loud and well;
And thrown into the dungeon's pit,
For trampling on the pit of hell.

Such were the evils, man of sin,
That I was fated to sustain;
And add to all, without—within,
A soul defiled with every stain
That man's reflecting mind can pain;
That pride, wrong, rage, despair, can make;
In fact, they'd nearly touch'd my brain,
And reason on her throne would shake.

But pity will the vilest seek,
If punished guilt will not repine,—
I heard a heavenly Teacher speak,
And felt the Sun of Mercy shine:
I hailed the light! the birth divine!
And then was sealed among the few;
Those angry fiends beheld the sign,
And from me in an instant flew.

Come hear how thus the charmers cry
To wandering sheep, the strays of sin,
While some the wicket-gate pass by,
And some will knock and enter in:
Full joyful 'tis a soul to win,
For he that winneth souls is wise;
Now hark! the holy strains begin,
And thus the sainted preacher cries:

"Pilgrim, burthened with thy sin,
Come the way to Zion's gate,
There, till Mercy let thee in,
Knock and weep and watch and wait.
Knock!—He knows the sinner's cry:
Weep!—He loves the mourner's tears:
Watch!—for saving grace is nigh:
Wait,—till heavenly light appears.

"Hark! it is the Bridegroom's voice:
Welcome, pilgrim, to thy rest;
Now within the gate rejoice,
Safe and sealed and bought and blest!
Safe—from all the lures of vice,
Sealed—by signs the chosen know,
Bought—by love and life the price,
Blest—the mighty debt to owe.

"Holy Pilgrim! what for thee
In a world like this remain?
From thy guarded breast shall flee
Fear and shame, and doubt and pain.
Fear—the hope of Heaven shall fly,
Shame—from glory's view retire,
Doubt—in certain rapture die,
Pain—in endless bliss expire."

But though my day of grace was come,
Yet still my days of grief I find;
The former clouds' collected gloom
Still sadden the reflecting mind;
The soul, to evil things consigned,
Will of their evil some retain;
The man will seem to earth inclined,
And will not look erect again.

Thus, though elect, I feel it hard
To lose what I possessed before,
To be from all my wealth debarred,—
The brave Sir Eustace is no more:
But old I wax, and passing poor,
Stern, rugged men my conduct view;
They chide my wish, they bar my door,
'Tis hard—I weep—you see I do.—

Must you, my friends, no longer stay?
Thus quickly all my pleasures end;
But I'll remember, when I pray,
My kind physician and his friend;
And those sad hours, you deign to spend
With me, I shall requite them all;
Sir Eustace for his friends shall send,
And thank their love at Greyling Hall.

## THE SEA: A SUMMER AND WINTER VIEW

(*From "The Borough"*)

Be it the summer-noon: a sandy space
The ebbing tide has left upon its place;
Then just the hot and stony beach above,
Light twinkling streams in bright confusion move;
(For heated thus, the warmer air ascends,
And with the cooler in its fall contends)—

Then the broad bosom of the ocean keeps
An equal motion; swelling as it sleeps,
Then slowly sinking; curling to the strand,
Faint, lazy waves o'ercreep the rigid sand,
Or tap the tarry boat with gentle blow,
And back return in silence, smooth and slow.
Ships in the calm seem anchored; for they glide
On the still sea, urged solely by the tide:
Art thou not present, this calm scene before,
Where all beside is pebbly length of shore,
And far as eye can reach, it can discern no more?

Yet sometimes comes a ruffling cloud to make
The quiet surface of the ocean shake;
As an awakened giant with a frown
Might show his wrath, and then to sleep sink down.

View now the Winter-storm! above, one cloud,
Black and unbroken, all the skies o'ershroud:
The unwieldy porpoise through the day before
Had rolled in view of boding men on shore;
And sometimes hid and sometimes showed his form,
Dark as the cloud, and furious as the storm.

All where the eye delights, yet dreads to roam,
The breaking billows cast the flying foam
Upon the billows rising—all the deep
Is restless change; the waves so swelled and steep,
Breaking and sinking, and the sunken swells,
Nor one, one moment, in its station dwells:
But nearer land you may the billows trace,
As if contending in their watery chase;

May watch the mightiest till the shoal they reach,
Then break and hurry to their utmost stretch;
Curled as they come, they strike with furious force,
And then re-flowing, take their grating course,
Raking the rounded flints, which ages past
Rolled by their rage, and shall to ages last.
Far off the Petrel in the troubled way
Swims with her brood, or flutters in the spray;
She rises often, often drops again,
And sports at ease on the tempestuous main.
High o'er the restless deep, above the reach
Of gunner's hope, vast flights of Wild-ducks stretch;
Far as the eye can glance on either side,
In a broad space and level line they glide;
All in their wedge-like figures from the north,
Day after day, flight after flight, go forth.
In-shore their passage tribes of Sea-gulls urge,
And drop for prey within the sweeping surge;
Oft in the rough opposing blast they fly
Far back, then turn, and all their force apply,
While to the storm they give their weak complaining cry;
Or clap the sleek white pinion to the breast,
And in the restless ocean dip for rest.
Darkness begins to reign; the louder wind
Appals the weak and awes the firmer mind;
But frights not him, whom evening and the spray
In part conceal—yon Prowler on his way:
Lo! he has something seen; he runs apace,
As if he feared companion in the chase;

He sees his prize, and now he turns again,
Slowly and sorrowing—"Was your search in vain?"
Gruffly he answers, "'Tis a sorry sight!
A seaman's body: there'll be more to-night!"
Hark! to those sounds! they're from distress at sea:
How quick they come! What terrors may there be!
Yes, 'tis a driven vessel: I discern
Lights, signs of terror, gleaming from the stern;
Others behold them too, and from the town
In various parties seamen hurry down;
Their wives pursue, and damsels urged by dread,
Lest men so dear be into danger led;
Their head the gown has hooded, and their call
In this sad night is piercing like the squall;
They feel their kinds of power, and when they meet,
Chide, fondle, weep, dare, threaten, or entreat.
See one poor girl, all terror and alarm,
Has fondly seized upon her lover's arm;
"Thou shalt not venture;" and he answers "No!
I will not:"—still she cries, "Thou shalt not go."
No need of this; not here the stoutest boat
Can through such breakers, o'er such billows float,
Yet may they view these lights upon the beach,
Which yield them hope, whom help can never reach.
From parted clouds the moon her radiance throws
On the wild waves, and all the danger shows;

But shows them beaming in her shining vest,
Terrific splendour ! gloom in glory dressed !
This for a moment, and then clouds again
Hide every beam, and fear and darkness reign.

## THE VICAR

(*From "The Borough"*)

WHERE ends our chancel in a vaulted space,
Sleep the departed Vicars of the place ;
Of most, all mention, memory, thought are past—
But take a slight memorial of the last.
To what famed college we our Vicar owe,
To what fair county, let historians show :
Few now remember when the mild young man,
Ruddy and fair, his Sunday-task began ;
Few live to speak of that soft soothing look
He cast around, as he prepared his book ;
It was a kind of supplicating smile,
But nothing hopeless of applause the while ;
And when he finished, his corrected pride
Felt the desert, and yet the praise denied.
Thus he his race began, and to the end
His constant care was, no man to offend ;
No haughty virtues stirred his peaceful mind ;
Nor urged the Priest to leave the Flock behind ;
He was his Master's Soldier, but not one
To lead an army of his Martyrs on :

Fear was his ruling passion; yet was Love,
Of timid kind, once known his heart to move;
It led his patient spirit where it paid
Its languid offerings to a listening Maid:
She, with her widowed Mother, heard him speak,
And sought awhile to find what he would seek:
Smiling he came, he smiled when he withdrew,
And paid the same attention to the two;
Meeting and parting without joy or pain,
He seemed to come that he might go again.
The wondering girl, no prude, but something nice,
At length was chilled by his unmelting ice;
She found her tortoise held such sluggish pace,
Then she must turn and meet him in the chase:
This not approving, she withdrew, till one
Came who appeared with livelier hope to run;
Who sought a readier way the heart to move,
Than by faint dalliance of unfixing love.
Accuse me not that I approving paint
Impatient Hope or Love without restraint;
Or think the Passions, a tumultuous throng,
Strong as they are, ungovernably strong:
But is the laurel to the soldier due,
Who, cautious, comes not into danger's view?
What worth has Virtue by Desire untried,
When Nature's self enlists on duty's side?
The married dame in vain assailed the truth
And guarded bosom of the Hebrew youth;
But with the daughter of the Priest of On[1]
The love was lawful, and the guard was gone;

[1] Joseph's wife was "the daughter of Potipherah, Priest in On."—Gen. xli. 45.

But Joseph's fame had lessened in our view,
Had he, refusing, fled the maiden too.
Yet our good priest to Joseph's praise aspired,
As once rejecting what his heart desired;
"I am escaped," he said, when none pursued;
When none attacked him, "I am unsubdued;"
"Oh pleasing pangs of love!" he sang again,
Cold to the joy, and stranger to the pain.
E'en in his age would he address the young,
"I too have felt these fires, and they are strong;"
But from the time he left his favourite maid,
To ancient females his devoirs were paid:
And still they miss him after Morning-prayer;
Nor yet successor fills the Vicar's chair,
Where kindred spirits in his praise agree,
A happy few, as mild and cool as he;
The easy followers in the female train,
Led without love, and captives without chain.
Ye Lilies male! think (as your tea you sip,
While the town small-talk flows from lip to lip;
Intrigues half-gathered, conversation-scraps,
Kitchen cabals, and nursery-mishaps,)
If the vast world may not some scene produce,
Some state where your small talents might have use;
Within seraglios you might harmless move,
'Mid ranks of beauty, and in haunts of love;
There from too daring man the treasures guard,
An easy duty, and its own reward;
Nature's soft substitutes, you there might save
From crime the tyrant, and from wrong the slave.
But let applause be dealt in all we may,
Our Priest was cheerful, and in season gay;

His frequent visits seldom failed to please ;
Easy himself, he sought his neighbour's ease :
To a small garden with delight he came,
And gave successive flowers a summer's fame ;
These he presented, with a grace his own,
To his fair friends, and made their beauties known,
Not without moral compliment ; how they
" Like flowers were sweet, and must like flowers decay."

Simple he was, and loved the simple truth,
Yet had some useful cunning from his youth ;
A cunning never to dishonour lent,
And rather for defence than conquest meant ;
'Twas fear of power, with some desire to rise,
But not enough to make him enemies ;
He ever aimed to please ; and to offend
Was ever cautious ; for he sought a friend ;
Yet for the friendship never much would pay,
Content to bow, be silent, and obey,
And by a soothing sufferance find his way.

[1] Fiddling and fishing were his arts : at times
He altered sermons, and he aimed at rhymes ;
And his fair friends, not yet intent on cards,
Oft he amused with riddles and charades.

Mild were his doctrines, and not one discourse
But gained in softness what it lost in force :
Kind his opinions ; he would not receive
An ill report, nor evil act believe ;
" If true, 'twas wrong ; but blemish great or small
Have all mankind ; yea, sinners are we all."

[1] A quaint advertisement for an assistant curate, of the year 1753, stipulates, among many other curious requirements, that he must be "a lover of Fiddling, but no dancer."

If ever fretful thought disturbed his breast,
If aught of gloom that cheerful mind oppressed,
It sprang from innovation; it was then
He spake of mischief made by restless men:
Not by new doctrines: never in his life
Would he attend to controversial strife;
For sects he cared not; "They are not of us,
Nor need we, brethren, their concerns discuss;
But 'tis the change, the schism at home I feel;
Ills few perceive, and none have skill to heal:
Not at the altar our young brethren read
(Facing their flock) the decalogue and creed;
But at their duty, in their desks they stand,
With naked surplice, lacking hood and band:
Churches are now of holy song bereft,
And half our ancient customs changed or left;
Few sprigs of ivy are at Christmas seen,
Nor crimson berry tips the holly's green;
Mistaken choirs refuse the solemn strain
Of ancient Sternhold,[1] which from ours amain
Comes flying forth from aisle to aisle about,
Sweet links of harmony and long drawn out."

These were to him essentials; all things new
He deemed superfluous, useless, or untrue:
To all beside indifferent, easy, cold,
Here the fire kindled, and the woe was told.

Habit with him was all the test of truth:
"It must be right: I've done it from my youth."

[1] Sternhold and Hopkin's metrical version of the Psalms, the first complete edition of which appeared in 1562. Tate and Brady's version appeared in 1696, and gradually superseded the other—to which, however, it was decidedly inferior.

Questions he answered in as brief a way:
"It must be wrong—it was of yesterday."
Though mild benevolence our Priest possessed,
'Twas but by wishes or by words expressed.
Circles in water, as they wider flow,
The less conspicuous in their progress grow,
And when at last they touch upon the shore,
Distinction ceases, and they're viewed no more.
His love, like that last circle, all embraced,
But with effect that never could be traced.
Now rests our Vicar. They who knew him best,
Proclaim his life to have been entirely rest;
Free from all evils which disturb his mind,
Whom studies vex and controversies blind.
The rich approved,—of them in awe he stood;
The poor admired,—they all believed him good;
The old and serious of his habits spoke;
The frank and youthful loved his pleasant joke;
Mothers approved a safe contented guest,
And daughters one who backed each small request;
In him his flock found nothing to condemn;
Him sectaries liked,—he never troubled them.
No trifles failed his yielding mind to please,
And all his passions sunk in early ease;
Nor one so old has left this world of sin,
More like the being that he entered in.

## THE ELECTION

(*From "The Borough"*)

Yes, our Election's past, and we've been free,
Somewhat as madmen without keepers be;
And such desire of Freedom has been shown,
That both the parties wished her all their own:
All our free smiths and cobblers in the town
Were loth to lay such pleasant freedom down;
To put the bludgeon and cockade aside,
And let us pass unhurt and undefied.
True! you might then your party's sign produce,
And so escape with only half the abuse:
With half the danger as you walked along,
With rage and threatening but from half the throng.
This you might do, and not your fortune mend,
For where you lost a foe, you gained a friend;
And to distress you, vex you, and expose,
Election-friends are worse than any foes;
The party-curse is with the canvass past,
But party-friendship, for your grief, will last.
Friends of all kinds; the civil and the rude,
Who humbly wish, or boldly dare to intrude:
These beg or take a liberty to come
(Friends should be free), and make your house their home;
They know that warmly you their cause espouse,
And come to make their boastings and their bows:

You scorn their manners, you their words mistrust,
But you must hear them, and they know you must.
One plainly sees a friendship firm and true,
Between the noble candidate and you;
So humbly begs (and states at large the case),
"You'll think of Bobby and the little place."
Stifling his shame by drink, a wretch will come,
And prate your wife and daughter from the room:
In pain you hear him, and at heart despise,
Yet with heroic mind your pangs disguise;
And still in patience to the sot attend,
To show what man can bear to serve a friend.
One enters hungry—not to be denied,
And takes his place and jokes—"We're of a side."
Yet worse, the proser who, upon the strength
Of his one vote, has tales of three hours' length;
This sorry rogue you bear, yet with surprise
Start at his oaths, and sicken at his lies.
Then comes there one, and tells in friendly way
What the opponents in their anger say;
All that through life has vexed you, all abuse,
Will this kind friend in pure regard produce;
And having through your own offences run,
Adds (as appendage) what your friends have done.
Has any female cousin made a trip
To Gretna Green, or more vexatious slip?
Has your wife's brother, or your uncle's son,
Done aught amiss, or is he thought to have done?
Is there of all your kindred some who lack
Vision direct, or have a gibbous back?

From your unlucky name may quips and puns
Be made by these upbraiding Goths and Huns?
To some great public character have you
Assigned the fame to worth and talents due,
Proud of your praise?—In this, in any case,
Where the brute-spirit may affix disgrace,
These friends will smiling bring it, and the while
You silent sit, and practise for a smile.
Vain of their power, and of their value sure,
They nearly guess the tortures you endure;
Nor spare one pang—for they perceive your heart
Goes with the cause; you'd die before you'd start;
Do what they may, they're sure you'll not offend
Men who have pledged their honours to your friend.
Those friends indeed, who start as in a race,
May love the sport, and laugh at this disgrace;
They have in view the glory and the prize,
Nor heed the dirty steps by which they rise:
But we their poor associates lose the fame,
Though more than partners in the toil and shame.
Were this the whole; and did the time produce
But shame and toil, but riot and abuse;
We might be then from serious griefs exempt,
And view the whole with pity and contempt.
Alas! but here the vilest passions rule;
It is Seduction's, is Temptation's school;
Where vices mingle in the oddest ways,
The grossest slander and the dirtiest praise;
Flattery enough to make the vainest sick,
And clumsy stratagem, and scoundrel trick:

Nay more, your anger and contempt to cause,
These, while they fish for profit, claim applause;
Bribed, bought, and bound, they banish shame
and fear;
Tell you they're staunch, and have a soul sincere;
Then talk of honour, and, if doubt's expressed,
Show where it lies, and smite upon the breast.
Among these worthies, some at first declare
For whom they vote: he then has most to
spare;
Others hang off—when coming to the post
Is spurring time, and then he'll spare the most:
While some demurring, wait, and find at last
The bidding languish, and the market past;
These will affect all bribery to condemn,
And be it Satan laughs, he laughs at them.
Some too are pious—One desired the Lord
To teach him where "to drop his little word;
To lend his vote where it will profit best;
Promotion came not from the east or west;
But as their freedom had promoted some,
He should be glad to know which way 'twould
come.
It was a naughty world, and where to sell
His precious charge, was more than he could
tell."
"But you succeeded?"—True, at mighty cost,
And our good friend, I fear, will think he's lost:
Inns, horses, chaises, dinners, balls, and notes;
What filled their purses, and what drenched
their throats;
The private pension, and indulgent lease,—
Have all been granted to these friends who
fleece;

Friends who will hang like burrs upon his coat,
And boundless judge the value of a vote.
And though the terrors of the time be passed,
There still remain the scatterings of the blast;
The boughs are parted that entwined before,
And ancient harmony exists no more;
The gusts of wrath our peaceful seats deform,
And sadly flows the sighing of the storm:
Those who have gained are sorry for the gloom,
But they who lost, unwilling peace should come;
There, open envy, here, suppressed delight,
Yet live till time shall better thoughts excite,
And so prepare us, by a six-years' truce,
Again for riot, insult, and abuse.
Our worthy Mayor, on the victorious part,
Cries out for peace, and cries with all his heart;
He, civil creature! ever does his best
To banish wrath from every voter's breast;
"For where," says he, with reason strong and plain,
"Where is the profit? what will anger gain?"
His short stout person he is wont to brace
In good brown broad-cloth, edged with two-inch lace,
When in his seat; and still the coat seems new,
Preserved by common use of seaman's blue.
He was a fisher from his earliest day,
And placed his nets within the Borough's bay;
Where, by his skates, his herrings, and his soles,
He lived, nor dreamed of Corporation-Doles;
But toiling saved, and saving, never ceased
Till he had boxed up twelvescore pounds at least:
He knew not money's power, but judged it best
Safe in his trunk to let his treasure rest;

Yet to a friend complained: "Sad charge, to keep
So many pounds; and then I cannot sleep:"
"Then put it out," replied the friend:—"What, give
My money up? why then I could not live:"
"Nay, but for interest place it in his hands
Who'll give you mortgage on his house or lands."
"Oh but," said Daniel, "that's a dangerous plan;
He may be robbed like any other man:"
"Still he is bound, and you may be at rest,
More safe the money than within your chest;
And you'll receive, from all deductions clear,
Five pounds for every hundred, every year."
"What good in that?" quoth Daniel, "for 'tis plain,
If part I take, there can but part remain:"
"What! you, my friend, so skilled in gainful things,
Have you to learn what Interest money brings?"
"Not so," said Daniel, "perfectly I know,
He's the most interest who has most to show."
"True! and he'll show the more, the more he lends;
Thus he his weight and consequence extends;
For they who borrow must restore each sum,
And pay for use. What, Daniel, art thou dumb?"
For much amazed was that good man.—"Indeed!"
Said he with gladdening eye, "will money breed?
How have I lived? I grieve, with all my heart,
For my late knowledge in this precious art:—
Five pounds for every hundred will he give?
And then the hundred?—I begin to live."—

So he began, and other means he found,
As he went on, to multiply a pound :
Though blind so long to Interest, all allow
That no man better understands it now :
Him in our Body-Corporate we chose,
And once among us, he above us rose ;
Stepping from post to post, he reached the Chair,
And there he now reposes—that's the Mayor.
But 'tis not he, 'tis not the kinder few,
The mild, the good, who can our peace renew ;
A peevish humour swells in every eye,
The warm are angry, and the cool are shy ;
There is no more the social board at whist,
The good old partners are with scorn dismissed ;
No more with dog and lantern comes the maid,
To guide the mistress when the rubber's played ;
Sad shifts are made lest ribands blue and green
Should at one table, at one time, be seen :
On care and merit none will now rely,
'Tis Party sells what party-friends must buy ;
The warmest burgess wears a bodger's coat,
And fashion gains less interest than a vote ;
Unchecked the vintner still his poison vends,
For he too votes, and can command his friends.
But this admitted ; be it still agreed,
These ill effects from noble cause proceed ;
Though like some vile excrescences they be,
The tree they spring from is a sacred tree,
And its true produce, Strength and Liberty.
Yet if we could the attendant ills suppress,
If we could make the sum of mischief less ;
If we could warm and angry men persuade
No more man's common comforts to invade ;

And that old ease and harmony re-seat,
In all our meetings, so in joy to meet;
Much would of glory to the Muse ensue,
And our good Vicar would have less to do.

## THE ARRIVAL OF THE PLAYERS[1]

(*From "The Borough"*)

Drawn by the annual call, we now behold
Our Troop Dramatic, heroes known of old,
And those, since last they marched, enlisted and
enrolled:
Mounted on hacks or borne in waggons some,
The rest on foot (the humbler brethren) come.
Three favoured places, an unequal time,
Join to support this company sublime:
Ours for the longer period—see how light
Yon parties move, their former friends in sight,
Whose claims are all allowed, and friendship
glads the night.
Now public rooms shall sound with words divine,
And private lodgings hear how heroes shine;
No talk of pay shall yet on pleasure steal,
But kindest welcome bless the friendly meal;
While o'er the social jug and decent cheer,
Shall be described the fortunes of the year.
Peruse these bills, and see what each can do,—
Behold! the prince, the slave, the monk, the Jew;

[1] This passage was particularly admired by Sir Walter Scott.

Change but the garment, and they'll all engage
To take each part, and act in every age:
Culled from all houses, what a house are they!
Swept from all barns, our Borough-critics say;
But with some portion of a critic's ire,
We all endure them; there are some admire:
They might have praise, confined to farce alone;
Full well they grin, they should not try to groan;
But then our servants' and our seamen's wives
Love all that rant and rapture as their lives;
He who 'Squire Richard's part could well sustain,[1]
Finds as King Richard he must roar amain—
"My horse! my horse!"—Lo! now to their abodes,
Come lords and lovers, empresses and gods.
The master-mover of these scenes has made
No trifling gain in this adventurous trade;
Trade we may term it, for he duly buys
Arms out of use and undirected eyes:
These he instructs, and guides them as he can,
And vends each night the manufactured man:
Long as our custom lasts they gladly stay,
Then strike their tents, like Tartars! and away!
The place grows bare where they too long remain,
But grass will rise ere they return again.
Children of Thespis, welcome; knights and queens!
Counts! barons! beauties! when before your scenes,
And mighty monarchs thundering from your throne;
Then step behind, and all your glory's gone:

[1] In "The Provoked Husband," by Vanburgh.

Of crown and palace, throne and guards bereft,
The pomp is vanished, and the care is left.
Yet strong and lively is the joy they feel,
When the full house secures the plenteous meal;
Flattering and flattered, each attempts to raise
A brother's merits for a brother's praise:
For never hero shows a prouder heart,
Than he who proudly acts a hero's part;
Nor without cause; the boards, we know, can yield
Place for fierce contest, like the tented field.
Graceful to tread the stage, to be in turn
The prince we honour, and the knave we spurn;
Bravely to bear the tumult of the crowd,
The hiss tremendous, and the censure loud:
These are their parts,—and he who these sustains,
Deserves some praise and profit for his pains.
Heroes at least of gentler kind are they,
Against whose swords no weeping widows pray,
No blood their fury sheds, nor havoc marks their way.
Sad happy race! soon raised and soon depressed,
Your days all passed in jeopardy and jest;
Poor without prudence, with afflictions vain,
Not warned by misery, not enriched by gain;
Whom Justice, pitying, chides from place to place,
A wandering, careless, wretched, merry race,
Whose cheerful looks assume, and play the parts
Of happy rovers with repining hearts;
Then cast off care, and in the mimic pain
Of tragic woe feel spirits light and vain,
Distress and hope—the mind's, the body's wear,
The man's affliction, and the actor's tear:
Alternate times of fasting and excess
Are yours, ye smiling children of distress.

## THE ALMS-HOUSE AND TRUSTEES

(*From "The Borough"*)

Leave now our streets, and in yon plain behold
Those pleasant Seats for the reduced and old;
A merchant's gift, whose wife and children
died,
When he to saving all his powers applied:
He wore his coat till bare was every thread,
And with the meanest fare his body fed.
He had a female cousin, who with care
Walked in his steps, and learned of him to spare;
With emulation and success they strove,
Improving still, still seeking to improve,
As if that useful knowledge they would gain—
How little food would human life sustain:
No pauper came their table's crumbs to crave;
Scraping they lived, but not a scrap they gave:
When beggars saw the frugal Merchant pass,
It moved their pity, and they said, "Alas!
Hard is thy fate, my brother," and they felt
A beggar's pride as they that pity dealt.
The dogs, who learn of man to scorn the poor,
Barked him away from every decent door;
While they who saw him bare, but thought him
rich,
To show respect or scorn, they knew not which.
But while our Merchant seemed so base and
mean,
He had his wanderings, sometimes "not un-
seen;"

To give in secret was a favourite act,
Yet more than once they took him in the fact:
To scenes of various woe he nightly went,
And serious sums in healing misery spent;
Oft has he cheered the wretched at a rate
For which he daily might have dined on plate;
He has been seen—his hair all silver-white,
Shaking and shining—as he stole by night,
To feed unenvied on his still delight.
A twofold taste he had; to give and spare,
Both were his duties, and had equal care;
It was his joy to sit alone and fast,
Then send a widow and her boys repast:
Tears in his eyes, would spite of him, appear,
But he from other eyes has kept the tear:
All in a wintry night from far he came,
To soothe the sorrows of a suffering dame;
Whose husband robbed him, and to whom he meant
A lingering, but reforming punishment:
Home then he walked, and found his anger rise
When fire and rushlight met his troubled eyes;
But these extinguished, and his prayer addressed
To Heaven in hope, he calmly sank to rest.
His seventieth year was passed, and then was seen
A building rising on the northern green,
There was no blinding all his neighbours' eyes,
Or surely no one would have seen it rise:
Twelve rooms contiguous stood, and six were near,
There men were placed, and sober matrons here:

There were behind small useful gardens made,
Benches before, and trees to give them shade;
In the first room were seen above, below,
Some marks of taste, a few attempts at show.
The founder's picture and his arms were there
(Not till he left us), and an elbowed chair;
There, 'mid these signs of his superior place,
Sat the mild ruler of this humble race.

Within the row are men who strove in vain,
Through years of trouble, wealth and ease to gain
Less must they have than an appointed sum,
And freemen been, or hither must not come;
They should be decent, and command respect,
(Though needing fortune), whom these doors protect,
And should for thirty dismal years have tried
For peace unfelt and competence denied.

Strange! that o'er men thus train'd in sorrow's school,
Power must be held, and they must live by rule;
Infirm, corrected by misfortunes, old,
Their habits settled and their passions cold;
Of health, wealth, power, and worldly cares bereft,
Still must they not at liberty be left;
There must be one to rule them, to restrain
And guide the movements of his erring train.

If then control imperious, check severe,
Be needed where such reverend men appear;
To what would youth, without such checks, aspire,
Free the wild wish, uncurbed the strong desire?

And where (in college or in camp) they found
The heart ungoverned and the hand unbound?
His house endowed, the generous man resigned
All power to rule, nay power of choice declined;
He and the female saint survived to view
Their work complete, and bade the world adieu!
Six are the Guardians of this happy seat,
And one presides when they on business meet;
As each expires, the five a brother choose;
Nor would *Sir Denys Brand* the charge refuse;
True, 'twas beneath him, "but to do men good
Was motive never by his heart withstood:"
He too is gone, and they again must strive
To find a man in whom his gifts survive.
Now, in the various records of the dead,
Thy worth, Sir Denys, shall be weighed and read;
There we the glory of thy house shall trace,
With each alliance of thy noble race.
Yes! here we have him!—"Came in William's reign,
The Norman *Brand;* the blood without a stain;
From the fierce Dane and ruder Saxon clear,
Pict, Irish, Scot, or Cambrian mountaineer:
But the pure Norman was the sacred spring,
And he, Sir Denys, was in heart a king:
Erect in person and so firm in soul,
Fortune he seemed to govern and control:
Generous as he who gives his all away,
Prudent as one who toils for weekly pay;
In him all merits were decreed to meet,
Sincere though cautious, frank and yet discreet,

Just all his dealings, faithful every word,
His passions' master, and his temper's lord."
Yet more, kind dealers in decaying fame?
His magnanimity you next proclaim;
You give him learning, joined with sound good sense,
And match his wealth with his benevolence;
What hides a multitude of sins, you add,
Yet seem to doubt if sins he ever had.
Poor honest Truth! thou writ'st of living men,
And art a railer and detractor then;
They die, again to be described, and now
A foe to merit and mankind art thou!
Why banish Truth? It injures not the dead,
It aids not them with flattery to be fed;
And when mankind such perfect pictures view,
They copy less, the more they think them true.
Let us a mortal as he was behold,
And see the dross adhering to the gold;
When we the errors of the virtuous state,
Then erring men their worth may emulate.
View then this picture of a noble mind,
Let him be wise, magnanimous, and kind;
What was the wisdom? Was it not the frown
That keeps all question, all inquiry down?
His words were powerful and decisive all,
But his slow reasons came for no man's call.
"'Tis thus," he cried, no doubt with kind intent,
To give results and spare all argument:—
"Let it be spared—all men at least agree
Sir Denys Brand had magnanimity:

His were no vulgar charities; none saw
Him like the Merchant to the hut withdraw;
He left to meaner minds the simple deed,
By which the houseless rest, the hungry feed;
His was a public bounty vast and grand,
'Twas not in him to work with viewless hand;
He raised the Room that towers above the street,
A public room where grateful parties meet;
He first the Life-boat planned; to him the place
Is deep in debt—'twas he revived the Race;
To every public act this hearty friend
Would give with freedom or with frankness lend;
His money built the Jail, nor prisoner yet
Sits at his ease, but he must feel the debt;
To these let candour add his vast display;
Around his mansion all is grand and gay,
And this is bounty with the name of pay."

I grant the whole, nor from one deed retract,
But wish recorded too the private act:
All these were great, but still our hearts approve
Those simpler tokens of the Christian love;
'Twould give me joy some gracious deed to meet,
That has not called for glory through the street:
Who felt for many, could not always shun,
In some soft moment, to be kind to one;
And yet they tell us, when Sir Denys died,
That not a widow in the Borough sighed;
Great were his gifts, his mighty heart I own,
But why describe what all the world has known?

The rest is petty pride, the useless art
Of a vain mind to hide a swelling heart;

Small was his private room: men found him there
By a plain table, on a paltry chair;
A wretched floor-cloth, and some prints around,
The easy purchase of a single pound:
These humble trifles and that study small
Make a strong contrast with the servants' hall;
There barely comfort, here a proud excess,
The pompous seat of pampered idleness,
Where the sleek rogues with one consent declare,
They would not live upon his honour's fare;
He daily took but one half-hour to dine,
On one poor dish and some three sips of wine;
Then he'd abuse them for their sumptuous feasts,
And say, "My friends! you make yourselves like beasts;
One dish suffices any man to dine,
But you are greedy as a herd of swine;
Learn to be temperate."—Had they dared to obey,
He would have praised and turn'd them all away.

Friends met Sir Denys riding in his ground,
And there the meekness of his spirit found:
For that grey coat, not new for many a year,
Hides all that would like decent dress appear;
An old brown pony 'twas his will to ride,
Who shuffled onward, and from side to side;
A five-pound purchase, but so fat and sleek,
His very plenty made the creature weak.

"Sir Denys Brand! and on so poor a steed!"
"Poor! it may be—such things I never heed:"
And who that youth behind, of pleasant mien,
Equipped as one who wishes to be seen,

Upon a horse, twice victor for a plate,
A noble hunter, bought at dearest rate?—
Him the lad fearing yet resolved to guide,
He curbs his spirit while he strokes his pride.
"A handsome youth, Sir Denys; and a horse
Of finer figure never trod the course,—
Yours without question?"—"Yes! I think a groom
Bought me the beast; I cannot say the sum:
I ride him not; it is a foolish pride
Men have in cattle—but my people ride;
The boy is—hark ye, sirrah! what's your name?
Ay, Jacob, yes! I recollect—the same;
As I bethink me now, a tenant's son—
I think a tenant,—is your father one?"
There was an idle boy who ran about,
And found his master's humble spirit out;
He would at awful distance snatch a look,
Then run away and hide him in some nook;
"For oh!" quoth he, "I dare not fix my sight
On him, his grandeur puts me in a fright;
Oh! Mister Jacob, when you wait on him,
Do you not quake and tremble every limb?"
The Steward soon had orders—"Summers, see
That Sam be clothed, and let him wait on me."

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Sir Denys died, bequeathing all affairs
In trust to *Laughton's* long-experienced cares;
Before a Guardian, and Sir Denys dead,
All rule and power devolved upon his head,
Numbers are called to govern, but in fact
Only the powerful and assuming act.

Laughton, too wise to be a dupe to fame,
Cared not a whit of what descent he came,
Till he was rich; he then conceived the thought
To fish for pedigree, but never caught:
All his desire, when he was young and poor,
Was to advance; he never cared for more:
"Let me buy, sell, be factor, take a wife,
Take any road, to get along in life."
Was he a miser then? a robber? foe
To those who trusted? a deceiver?—No!
He was ambitious; all his powers of mind
Were to one end controlled, improved, combined;
Wit, learning, judgment, were, by his account,
Steps for the ladder he designed to mount;
Such step was money: wealth was but his slave,
For power he gained it, and for power he gave:
Full well the Borough knows that he'd the art
Of bringing money to the surest mart;
Friends too were aids,—they led to certain ends,
Increase of power and claim on other friends.
A favourite step was marriage: then he gained
Seat in our Hall, and o'er his party reigned;
Houses and lands he bought, and longed to buy,
But never drew the springs of purchase dry,
And thus at last they answered every call,
The failing found him ready for their fall:
He walks along the street, the mart, the quay,
And looks and mutters, "This belongs to me."
His passions all partook the general bent;
Interest informed him when he should resent,
How long resist, and on what terms relent:

In points where he determined to succeed,
In vain might reason or compassion plead;
But gained his point, he was the best of men,
'Twas loss of time to be vexatious then:
Hence he was mild to all men whom he led;
Of all who dared resist, the scourge and dread.
Falsehood in him was not the useless lie
Of boasting pride or laughing vanity:
It was the gainful, the persuading art,
That made its way and won the doubting heart,
Which argued, softened, humbled, and prevailed,
Nor was it tried till every truth had failed;
No sage on earth could more than he despise
Degrading, poor, unprofitable lies.
Though fond of gain, and grieved by wanton waste,
To social parties he had no distaste;
With one presiding purpose in his view,
He sometimes could descend to trifle too!
Yet, in these moments, he had still the art
To ope the looks and close the guarded heart;
And, like the public host, has sometimes made
A grand repast, for which the guests have paid.
At length, with power endued and wealthy grown,
Frailties and passions, long suppressed, were shown:
Then to provoke him was a dangerous thing,
His pride would punish, and his temper sting;
His powerful hatred sought the avenging hour,
And his proud vengeance struck with all his power,
Save when the offender took a prudent way
The rising storm of fury to allay:

This might he do, and so in safety sleep,
By largely casting to the angry deep ;
Or, better yet (its swelling force to assuage),
By pouring oil of flattery on its rage.
And now, of all the heart approved, possessed,
Feared, favoured, followed, dreaded and caressed,
He gently yields to one mellifluous joy,
The only sweet that is not found to cloy,
Bland adulation !—other pleasures pall
On the sick taste, and transient are they all ;
But this one sweet has such enchanting power,
The more we take, the faster we devour :
Nauseous to those who must the dose apply,
And most disgusting to the standers-by ;
Yet in all companies will Laughton feed,
Nor care how grossly men perform the deed.
As gapes the nursling, or, what comes more near,
Some Friendly-Island chief, for hourly cheer ;
When wives and slaves, attending round his seat,
Prepare by turns the masticated meat :
So for this master, husband, parent, friend,
His ready slaves their various efforts blend,
And, to their lord still eagerly inclined,
Pour the crude trash of a dependent mind.
But let the Muse assign the man his due,
Worth he possessed, nor were his virtues few :—
He sometimes helped the injured in their cause ;
His power and purse have backed the failing laws ;
He for religion has a due respect,
And all his serious notions are correct ;

Although he prayed and languished for a son,
He grew resigned when Heaven denied him one;
He never to this quiet mansion sends
Subject unfit, in compliment to friends;
Not so Sir Denys, who would yet protest
He always chose the worthiest and the best:
Not men in trade by various loss brought down,
But those whose glory once amazed the town,
Who their last guinea in their pleasures spent,
Yet never fell so low as to repent:
To these his pity he could largely deal,
Wealth they had known, and therefore want could feel.
Three seats were vacant while Sir Denys reigned,
And three such favourites their admission gained.

## THE POOR AND THEIR DWELLINGS

Yes! we've our Borough-vices, and I know
How far they spread, how rapidly they grow;
Yet think not virtue quits the busy place,
Nor charity, the virtues' crown and grace.
"Our Poor, how feed we?"—To the most we give
A weekly dole, and at their homes they live;—

Others together dwell,—but when they come
To the low roof, they see a kind of home,
A social people whom they've ever known,
With their own thoughts, and manners like their own.

At her old house, her dress, her air the same,
I see mine ancient Letter-loving dame:
"Learning, my child," said she, "shall fame command;
Learning is better worth than house or land—
For houses perish, lands are gone and spent;
In learning then excel, for that's most excellent."
"And what her learning?"—'Tis with awe to look
In every verse throughout one sacred book;
From this her joy, her hope, her peace is sought;
This she has learned, and she is nobly taught.

If aught of mine have gained the public ear;
If RUTLAND[1] deigns these humble Tales to hear;
If critics pardon what my friends approved;
Can I mine ancient Widow pass unmoved?
Shall I not think what pains the matron took,
When first I trembled o'er the gilded book?
How she, all patient, both at eve and morn,
Her needle pointed at the guarding horn;
And how she soothed me, when, with study sad,
I laboured on to reach the final zad?
Shall I not grateful still the dame survey,
And ask the Muse the poet's debt to pay?

Nor I alone, who hold a trifler's pen,
But half our bench of wealthy, weighty men,

[1] The Duke of Rutland, to whom "The Borough" was dedicated.

Who rule our Borough, who enforce our laws;
They own the matron as the leading cause,
And feel the pleasing debt, and pay the just
applause:
To her own house is borne the week's supply;
There she in credit lives, there hopes in peace
to die.
With her a harmless Idiot we behold,
Who hoards up silver shells for shining gold:
These he preserves, with unremitted care,
To buy a seat, and reign the Borough's mayor:
Alas!—who could the ambitious changeling tell,
That what he sought our rulers dared to sell?
Near these a Sailor, in that hut of thatch
(A fish-boat's cabin is its nearest match),
Dwells, and the dungeon is to him a seat,
Large as he wishes—in his view complete:
A lockless coffer and a lidless hutch
That hold his stores, have room for twice as
much:
His one spare shirt, long glass, and iron box,
Lie all in view; no need has he for locks:
Here he abides, and, as our strangers pass,
He shows the shipping, he presents the glass;
He makes (unasked) their ports and business
known,
And (kindly heard) turns quickly to his own,
Of noble captains, heroes every one,—
You might as soon have made the steeple run;
And then his messmates, if you're pleased to stay,
He'll one by one the gallant souls display,
And as the story verges to an end,
He'll wind from deed to deed, from friend to
friend;

He'll speak of those long lost, the brave of old,
As princes generous and as heroes bold;
Then will his feelings rise, till you may trace
Gloom, like a cloud, frown o'er his manly face,—
And then a tear or two, which sting his pride;
These he will dash indignantly aside,
And splice his tale;—now take him from his cot,
And for some cleaner berth exchange his lot,
How will he all that cruel aid deplore?
His heart will break, and he will fight no more.

Here is the poor old Merchant: he declined,
And, as they say, is not in perfect mind;
In his poor house, with one poor maiden friend,
Quiet he paces to his journey's end.

Rich in his youth, he traded and he failed;
Again he tried, again his fate prevailed;
His spirits low, and his exertions small,
He fell perforce, he seemed decreed to fall:
Like the gay knight, unapt to rise was he,
But downward sank with sad alacrity.
A borough-place we gained him—in disgrace
For gross neglect, he quickly lost the place;
But still he kept a kind of sullen pride,
Striving his wants to hinder or to hide;
At length, compelled by very need, in grief
He wrote a proud petition for relief.

"He did suppose a fall, like his, would prove
Of force to wake their sympathy and love;
Would make them feel the changes all may know,
And stir them up a due regard to show."

His suit was granted;—to an ancient maid,
Relieved herself, relief for him was paid:

Here they together (meet companions) dwell,
And dismal tales of man's misfortunes tell:
"'Twas not a world for them, God help them, they
Could not deceive, nor flatter, nor betray;
But there's a happy change, a scene to come,
And they, God help them! shall be soon at home."
If these no pleasures nor enjoyments gain,
Still none their spirits nor their speech restrain;
They sigh at ease, 'mid comforts they complain.
The poor will grieve, the poor will weep and sigh,
Both when they know, and when they know not why;
But we our bounty with such care bestow,
That cause for grieving they shall seldom know.
Your Plan I love not;—with a number you
Have placed your poor, your pitiable few:
There, in one house, throughout their lives to be,
The pauper-palace which they hate to see:
That giant-building, that high-bounding wall,
Those bare-worn walks, that lofty thundering hall,
That large loud clock, which tolls each dreaded hour,
Those gates and locks, and all those signs of power;
It is a prison, with a milder name,
Which few inhabit without dread or shame.
Be it agreed—the Poor who hither come
Partake of plenty, seldom found at home;
That airy rooms and decent beds are meant
To give the poor by day, by night, content;

That none are frightened, once admitted here,
By the stern looks of lordly Overseer:
Grant that the Guardians of the place attend,
And ready ear to each petition lend;
That they desire the grieving poor to show
What ills they feel, what partial acts they know,
Not without promise, nay desire to heal
Each wrong they suffer, and each woe they feel.
Alas! their sorrows in their bosoms dwell;
They've much to suffer, but have nought to tell;
They have no evil in the place to state,
And dare not say it is the house they hate:
They own there's granted all such place can give,
But live repining, for 'tis there they live.
Grandsires are there, who now no more must see,
No more must nurse upon the trembling knee,
The lost loved daughter's infant progeny:
Like death's dread mansion, this allows not place
For joyful meetings of a kindred race.
Is not the matron there, to whom the son
Was wont at each declining day to run?
He (when his toil was over) gave delight,
By lifting up the latch, and one "Good night."
Yes, she is here; but nightly to her door
The son, still labouring, can return no more.
Widows are here, who in their huts were left,
Of husbands, children, plenty, ease bereft;
Yet all that grief within the humble shed
Was softened, softened in the humble bed:
But here, in all its force, remains the grief,
And not one softening object for relief.

Who can, when here, the social neighbour meet?
Who learn the story current in the street?
Who to the long-known intimate impart
Facts they have learned or feelings of the heart?
They talk indeed, but who can choose a friend,
Or seek companions at their journey's end?
Here are not those whom they when infants knew;
Who, with like fortune, up to manhood grew;
Who, with like troubles, at old age arrived;
Who, like themselves, the joy of life survived;
Whom time and custom so familiar made,
That looks the meaning in the mind conveyed:
But here to strangers, words nor looks impart
The various movements of the suffering heart;
Nor will that heart with those alliance own,
To whom its views and hopes are all unknown.
What, if no grievous fears their lives annoy,
Is it not worse no prospects to enjoy?
'Tis cheerless living in such bounded view,
With nothing dreadful, but with nothing new;
Nothing to bring them joy, to make them weep,—
The day itself is, like the night, asleep;
Or on the sameness if a break be made,
'Tis by some pauper to his grave conveyed;
By smuggled news from neighbouring village told,
News never true, or truth a twelvemonth old;
By some new inmate doomed with them to dwell,
Or justice come to see that all goes well;
Or change of room, or hour of leave to crawl
On the black footway winding with the wall,

Till the stern bell forbids, or master's sterner call.
Here too the mother sees her children trained,
Her voice excluded and her feelings pained:
Who govern here, by general rules must move,
Where ruthless custom rends the bond of love.
Nations we know have nature's law trangressed,
And snatched the infant from the parent's breast;
But still for public good the boy was trained,
The mother suffered, but the matron gained:
Here nature's outrage serves no cause to aid;
The ill is felt, but not the Spartan made.
Then too I own, it grieves me to behold
Those ever virtuous, helpless now and old,
By all for care and industry approved,
For truth respected, and for temper loved;
And who, by sickness and misfortune tried,
Gave want its worth and poverty its pride:
I own it grieves me to behold them sent
From their old home; 'tis pain, 'tis punishment,
To leave each scene familiar, every face,
For a new people and a stranger race;
For those who, sunk in sloth and dead to shame,
From scenes of guilt with daring spirits came;
Men, just and guileless, at such manners start,
And bless their God that time has fenced their heart,
Confirmed their virtue, and expelled the fear
Of vice in minds so simple and sincere.
Here the good pauper, losing all the praise
By worthy deeds acquired in better days,
Breathes a few months, then, to his chamber led,
Expires, while strangers prattle round his bed.
The grateful hunter, when his horse is old,
Wills not the useless favourite to be sold;

He knows his former worth, and gives him place
In some fair pasture, till he runs his race:
But has the labourer, has the seaman done
Less worthy service, though not dealt to one?
Shall we not then contribute to their ease,
In their old haunts, where ancient objects please?
That, till their sight shall fail them, they may trace
The well-known prospect and the long-loved face.
The noble oak, in distant ages seen,
With far-stretched boughs and foliage fresh and green,
Though now its bare and forky branches show
How much it lacks the vital warmth below,
The stately ruin yet our wonder gains,
Nay, moves our pity, without thought of pains:
Much more shall real wants and cares of age
Our gentler passions in their cause engage;—
Drooping and burthened with a weight of years,
What venerable ruin man appears!
How worthy pity, love, respect, and grief—
He claims protection—he compels relief;—
And shall we send him from our view, to brave
The storms abroad, whom we at home might save,
And let a stranger dig our ancient brother's grave?
No! we will shield him from the storm he fears,
And when he falls, embalm him with our tears.

---

Farewell to these; but all our poor to know,
Let's seek the winding Lane, the narrow Row,

Suburban prospects, where the traveller stops
To see the sloping tenement on props,
With building-yards immixed, and humble sheds
and shops;
Where the Cross-Keys and Plumber's-Arms
invite
Laborious men to taste their coarse delight;
Where the low porches, stretching from the
door,
Gave some distinction in the days of yore,
Yet now neglected, more offend the eye,
By gloom and ruin, than the cottage by:
Places like these the noblest town endures,
The gayest palace has its sinks and sewers.
Here is no pavement, no inviting shop,
To give us shelter when compelled to stop;
But plashy puddles stand along the way,
Filled by the rain of one tempestuous day;
And these so closely to the buildings run,
That you must ford them, for you cannot shun;
Though here and there convenient bricks are laid
And door-side heaps afford their dubious aid.
Lo! yonder shed; observe its garden-ground,
With the low paling, formed of wreck, around:
There dwells a Fisher; if you view his boat,
With bed and barrel—'tis his house afloat;
Look at his house, where ropes, nets, blocks,
abound,
Tar, pitch, and oakum—'tis his boat aground:
That space enclosed, but little he regards,
Spread o'er with relics of masts, sails, and
yards:
Fish by the wall, on spit of elder, rest,
Of all his food, the cheapest and the best,

By his own labour caught, for his own hunger dressed.
Here our reformers come not; none object
To paths polluted, or upbraid neglect;
None care that ashy heaps at doors are cast,
That coal-dust flies along the blinding blast:
None heed the stagnant pools on either side,
Where new-launched ships of infant-sailors ride:
Rodneys in rags here British valour boast,
And lisping Nelsons fright the Gallic coast.
They fix the rudder, set the swelling sail,
They point the bowsprit, and they blow the gale:
True to her port, the frigate scuds away,
And o'er that frowning ocean finds her bay:
Her owner rigged her, and he knows her worth,
And sees her, fearless, gunwale-deep go forth;
Dreadless he views his sea, by breezes curled,
When inch-high billows vex the watery world.
There, fed by food they love, to rankest size,
Around the dwellings docks and wormwood rise;
Here the strong mallow strikes her slimy root,
Here the dull nightshade hangs her deadly fruit:
On hills of dust the henbane's faded green,
And pencilled flower of sickly scent is seen;
At the wall's base the fiery nettle springs,
With fruit globose and fierce with poisoned stings;
Above (the growth of many a year) is spread
The yellow level of the stone-crop's bed:
In every chink delights the fern to grow,
With glossy leaf and tawny bloom below;

These, with our sea-weeds, rolling up and down,
Form the contracted Flora of the town.
Say, wilt thou more of scenes so sordid know?
Then will I lead thee down the dusty Row;
By the warm alley and the long close lane,—
There mark the fractured door and papered pane,
Where flags the noon-tide air, and, as we pass,
We fear to breathe the putrefying mass:
But fearless yonder matron; she disdains
To sigh for zephyrs from ambrosial plains;
But mends her meshes torn, and pours her lay
All in the stifling fervour of the day.
Her naked children round the alley run,
And rolled in dust, are bronzed beneath the sun.
Or gambol round the dame, who, loosely dressed,
Woos the coy breeze to fan the open breast:
She, once a handmaid, strove by decent art
To charm her sailor's eye and touch his heart;
Her bosom then was veiled in kerchief clean,
And fancy left to form the charms unseen.
But when a wife, she lost her former care,
Nor thought on charms, nor time for dress could spare;
Careless she found her friends who dwelt beside,
No rival beauty kept alive her pride:
Still in her bosom virtue keeps her place,
But decency is gone, the virtues' guard and grace.
See that long boarded Building!—By these stairs
Each humble tenant to that home repairs—
By one large window lighted—it was made
For some bold project, some design in trade:

This failed,—and one, a humourist in his way,
(Ill was the humour,) bought it in decay;
Nor will he sell, repair, or take it down;
'Tis his,—what cares he for the talk of town?
"No! he will let it to the poor;—a home
Where he delights to see the creatures come:"
"They may be thieves;"—"Well, so are richer men;"
"Or idlers, cheats, or prostitutes;"—"What then?"
"Outcasts pursued by justice, vile and base;"—
"They need the more his pity and the place:"
Convert to system his vain mind has built,
He gives asylum to deceit and guilt.

In this vast room, each place by habit fixed,
Are sexes, families, and ages mixed—
To union forced by crime, by fear, by need,
And all in morals and in modes agreed;
Some ruined men, who from mankind remove;
Some ruined females, who yet talk of love;
And some grown old in idleness—the prey
To vicious spleen, still railing through the day;
And need and misery, vice and danger bind,
In sad alliance each degraded mind.

[1] That window view!—oiled paper and old glass
Stain the strong rays, which, though impeded, pass,
And give a dusty warmth to that huge room,
The conquered sunshine's melancholy gloom;
When all those western rays, without so bright,
Within become a ghastly glimmering light,

[1] Crabbe's "Dutch minuteness" is nowhere more strikingly exemplified than in the following lines.

As pale and faint upon the floor they fall,
Or feebly gleam on the opposing wall:
That floor, once oak, now pieced with fir unplaned,
Or, where not pieced, in places bored and stained;
That wall once whitened, now an odious sight,
Stained with all hues, except its ancient white;
The only door is fastened by a pin,
Or stubborn bar, that none may hurry in:
For this poor room, like rooms of greater pride,
At times contains what prudent men would hide.
Where'er the floor allows an even space,
Chalking and marks of various games have place;
Boys, without foresight, pleased in halters swing;
On a fixed hook men cast a flying ring;
While gin and snuff their female neighbours share,
And the black beverage in the fractured ware.
On swinging shelf are things incongruous stored,—
Scraps of their food,—the cards and cribbage-board,—
With pipes and pouches; while on peg below,
Hang a lost member's fiddle and its bow;
That still reminds them how he'd dance and play,
Ere sent untimely to the Convicts' Bay.
Here by a curtain, by a blanket there,
Are various beds concealed, but none with care;
Where some by day and some by night, as best
Suit their employments, seek uncertain rest;
The drowsy children at their pleasure creep
To the known crib, and there securely sleep.

Each end contains a grate, and these beside
Are hung utensils for their boiled and fried—
All used at any hour, by night, by day,
As suit the purse, the person, or the prey.
Above the fire, the mantel-shelf contains
Of china-ware some poor unmatched remains;
There many a tea-cup's gaudy fragment stands,
All placed by vanity's unwearied hands;
For here she lives, e'en here she looks about,
To find some small consoling objects out:
Nor heed these Spartan dames their house, not sit
'Mid cares domestic,—they nor sew nor knit;
But of their fate discourse, their ways, their wars,
With arm'd authorities, their 'scapes and scars:
These lead to present evils, and a cup,
If fortune grant it, winds description up.
High hung at either end, and next the wall,
Two ancient mirrors show the forms of all,
In all their force;—these aid them in their dress,
But with the good, the evils too express,
Doubling each look of care, each token of distress.

## THE CONDEMNED FELON[1]

(*From "The Borough"*)

Not so he felt, who with her was to pay
The forfeit, life—with dread he viewed the day,
And that short space which yet for him remained,
Till with his limbs his faculties were chained:
He paced his narrow bounds some ease to find,
But found it not,—no comfort reach'd his mind:
Each sense was palsied; when he tasted food,
He sigh'd and said, "Enough—'tis very good."
Since his dread sentence, nothing seemed to be
As once it was—he seeing could not see,
Nor hearing, hear aright;—when first I came
Within his view, I fancied there was shame,
I judged resentment; I mistook the air,—
These fainter passions live not with despair;
Or but exist and die:—Hope, fear, and love,
Joy, doubt, and hate, may other spirits move,
But touch not his, who every waking hour
Has one fixed dread, and always feels its power.

"But will not Mercy?"—No! she cannot plead
For such an outrage;—'twas a cruel deed:

[1] Crabbe, according to his son, drew this extraordinarily powerful picture from life, having visited the condemned cell in Newgate.

He stopped a timid traveller ;—to his breast,
With oaths and curses, was the danger pressed :—
No ! he must suffer : pity we may find
For one man's pangs, but must not wrong mankind.

Still I behold him, every thought employed
On one dire view !—all others are destroyed ;
This makes his features ghastly, gives the tone
Of his few words resemblance to a groan ;
He takes his tasteless food, and when 'tis done,
Counts up his meals, now lessened by that one ;
For expectation is on time intent,
Whether he brings us joy or punishment.

Yes ! e'en in sleep the impressions all remain,
He hears the sentence and he feels the chain ;
He sees the judge and jury, when he shakes,
And loudly cries, "Not guilty," and awakes :
Then chilling tremblings o'er his body creep,
Till worn-out nature is compelled to sleep.

Now comes the dream again : it shows each scene,
With each small circumstance that comes between—
The call to suffering and the very deed—
There crowds go with him, follow, and precede ;
Some heartless shout, some pity, all condemn,
While he in fancied envy looks at them :
He seems the place for that sad act to see,
And dreams the very thirst which then will be :
A priest attends—it seems, the one he knew
In his best days, beneath whose care he grew.

At this his terrors take a sudden flight,
He sees his native village with delight;
The house, the chamber, where he once arrayed
His youthful person; where he knelt and prayed:
Then too the comforts he enjoyed at home,
The days of joy; the joys themselves are come;—
The hours of innocence;—the timid look
Of his loved maid, when first her hand he took,
And told his hope; her trembling joy appears,
Her forced reserve and his retreating fears.

All now is present;—'tis a moment's gleam
Of former sunshine—stay, delightful dream!
Let him within his pleasant garden walk,
Give him her arm, of blessings let them talk.

Yes! all are with him now, and all the while
Life's early prospects and his Fanny's smile:
Then come his sister and his village-friend,
And he will now the sweetest moments spend
Life has to yield;—No! never will he find
Again on earth such pleasure in his mind:
He goes through shrubby walks these friends among,
Love in their looks and honour on the tongue:
Nay, there's a charm beyond what nature shows,
The bloom is softer and more sweetly glows;—
Pierced by no crime, and urged by no desire
For more than true and honest hearts require,
They feel the calm delight, and thus proceed
Through the green lane,—then linger in the mead,—

Stray o'er the heath in all its purple bloom,—
And pluck the blossom where the wild bees hum,
Then through the broomy bound with ease they pass,
And press the sandy sheep-walk's slender grass,
Where dwarfish flowers among the gorse are spread,
And the lamb browses by the linnet's bed;
Then 'cross the bounding brook they make their way
O'er its rough bridge—and there behold the bay!—
The ocean smiling to the fervid sun—
The waves that faintly fall and slowly run—
The ships at distance and the boats at hand;
And now they walk upon the sea-side sand,
Counting the number and what kind they be,
Ships softly sinking in the sleepy sea:
Now arm in arm, now parted, they behold
The glittering waters on the shingles rolled:
The timid girls, half dreading their design,
Dip the small foot in the retarded brine,
And search for crimson weeds, which spreading flow,
Or lie like pictures on the sand below:
With all those bright red pebbles, that the sun
Through the small waves so softly shines upon;
And those live lucid jellies which the eye
Delights to trace as they swim glittering by:
Pearl-shells and rubied star-fish they admire,
And will arrange above the parlour-fire,—
Tokens of bliss!—"Oh! horrible! a wave
Roars as it rises—save me, Edward! save!"
She cries:—Alas! the watchman on his way
Calls, and lets in—truth, terror, and the day!

## ON RECEIVING FROM A LADY A PRESENT OF A RING[1]

A RING to me Cecilia sends—
And what to show?—that we are friends;
That she with favour reads my lays,
And sends a token of her praise;
Such as the nun, with heart of snow,
Might on her confessor bestow;
Or which some favourite nymph would pay,
Upon her grandsire's natal day,
And to his trembling hand impart
The offering of a feeling heart.

And what shall I return the fair
And flattering nymph?—A verse?—a prayer?
For were a Ring my present too,
I see the smile that must ensue;—
The smile that pleases though it stings,
And says—"No more of giving rings:
Remember, thirty years are gone,
Old friend! since you presented one!"

Well! one there is, or one shall be,
To give a ring instead of me;
And with it sacred vows for life
To love the fair—the angel-wife;

[1] These verses, obviously, are not brilliant. But they are of interest as a specimen of Crabbe's lighter verse—of which he wrote much but printed little.

In that one act may every grace,
And every blessing have their place—
And give to future hours the bliss,
The charm of life, derived from this;
And when even love no more supplies—
  When weary nature sinks to rest;—
May brighter, steadier light arise,
  And make the parting moment blest!

## THE WORLD OF DREAMS

I

And is thy soul so wrapt in sleep?
  Thy senses, thy affections, fled?
No play of fancy thine, to keep
  Oblivion from that grave, thy bed?
Then art thou but the breathing dead
  I envy, but I pity too:
The bravest may *my* terrors dread,
  The happiest fain *my* joys pursue.

II

Soon as the real World I lose,
  Quick Fancy takes her wonted way,
Or Baxter's sprites my soul abuse—
  For how it is I cannot say,
Nor to what powers a passive prey,
  I feel such bliss, I fear such pain;
But all is gloom, or all is gay,
  Soon as the ideal World I gain.

III

Come, then, I woo thee, sacred Sleep!
Vain troubles of the world farewell!
Spirits of Ill! your distance keep—
And in your own dominions dwell,
Ye, the sad emigrants from hell!
Watch, dear seraphic beings, round,
And these black Enemies repel;
Safe be my soul, my slumbers sound.

IV

In vain I pray! It is my sin
That thus admits the shadowy throng.
Oh! now they break tumultuous in—
Angels of darkness fierce and strong.
Oh! I am borne of fate along;
My soul, subdued, admits the foe,
Perceives and yet endures the wrong,
Resists, and yet prepares to go.

V

Where am I now? and what to meet?
Where I have been entrapt before;
The wicked city's vilest street,—
I know what I must now explore.
The dark-browed throng more near and more,
With murderous looks are on me thrust,
And lo! they ope the accursed door,
And I must go—I know I must!

VI

That female fiend!—Why is she there?
Alas! I know her.—Oh, begone!
Why is that tainted bosom bare,
Why fixed on me that eye of stone?

Why have they left us thus alone?
I saw the deed—why then appear?
Thou art not formed of blood and bone!
Come not, dread being, come not near!

VII

So! all is quiet, calm, serene;
I walk a noble mansion round—
From room to room, from scene to scene,
I breathless pass, in gloom profound:
No human shape, no mortal sound—
I feel an awe, I own a dread,
And still proceed!—nor stop nor bound—
And all is silent, all is dead.

VIII

Now I'm hurried, borne along,
All is business! all alive!
Heavens! how mighty is the throng,
Voices humming like a hive!
Through the swelling crowd I strive,
Bustling forth my way to trace:
Never fated to arrive
At the still-expected place.

IX

Ah me! how sweet the morning sun
Deigns on yon sleepy town to shine!
How soft those far-off rivers run—
Those trees their leafy heads decline!
Balm-breathing zephyrs, all divine,
Their health-imparting influence give:
Now, all that earth allows is mine—
Now, now I dream not, but I live.

X

My friend, my brother, lost in youth,
I meet in doubtful, glad surprise,
In conscious love, in fearless truth:
What pleasures in the meeting rise!
Ah! brief enjoyment!—Pleasure dies
E'en in its birth, and turns to pain:
He meets me with hard glazed eyes!
He quits me—spurns me—with disdain.

XI

I sail the sea, I walk the land;
In all the world am I alone:
Silent I pace the sea-worn sand,
Silent I view the princely throne;
I listen heartless for the tone
Of winds and waters, but in vain;
Creation dies without a groan!
And I without a hope remain!

XII

Unnumbered riches I behold,
Glorious untasted I survey:
My heart is sick, my bosom cold,
Friends! neighbours! kindred! where are they?
In the sad, last, long, endless day!
When I can neither pray nor weep,
Doomed o'er the sleeping world to stray,
And not to die, and not to sleep.

XIII

Beside the summer sea I stand,
Where the slow billows swelling shine:
How beautiful this pearly sand,
That waves, and winds, and years refine:

Be this delicious quiet mine!
The joy of youth! so sweet before,
When I could thus my frame recline,
And watch the entangled weeds ashore.

XIV

Yet, I remember not that sea,
That other shore on yonder side:
Between them narrow bound must be,
If equal rise the opposing tide—
Lo! lo! they rise—and I abide
The peril of the meeting flood:
Away, away, my footsteps slide—
I pant upon the clinging mud!

XV

Oh, let me now possession take
Of this—it cannot be a dream.
Yes! now the soul must be awake—
These pleasures are—they do not seem.
And is it true? Oh, joy extreme!
All whom I loved, and thought them dead,
Far down in Lethe's flowing stream,
And, with them, life's best pleasures fled:

XVI

Yes, many a tear for them I shed—
Tears that relieve the anxious breast;
And now, by heavenly favour led,
We meet—and One, the fairest, best,
Among them—ever-welcome guest!
Within the room, that seemed destroyed—
This room endeared, and still possessed,
By this dear party still enjoyed.

XVII

Speak to me! speak! that I may know
I am thus happy!—dearest, speak!
Those smiles that haunt fond memory show!
Joy makes us doubtful, wavering, weak;
But yet 'tis joy—And all I seek
Is mine! What glorious day is this!
Now let me bear with spirit meek
An hour of pure and perfect bliss.

XVIII

But do ye look indeed as friends?
Is there no change? Are not ye cold?
Oh! I do dread that Fortune lends
Fictitious good!—that I behold,
To lose, these treasures, which of old
Were all my glory, all my pride:
May not these arms that form enfold?
Is all affection asks denied?

XIX

Say, what is this!—How are we tried,
In this sad world!—I know not these—
All strangers, none to me allied—
Those aspects blood and spirit freeze:
Dear forms, my wandering judgment spare;
And thou, most dear, these fiends disarm,
Resume thy wonted looks and air,
And break this melancholy charm.

XX

And are they vanished? Is she lost?
Shall never day that form restore?
Oh! I am all by fears engrossed;
Sad truth has broken in once more,

And I the brief delight deplore :
How durst they such resemblance take ?
Heavens ! with what grace the mask they wore !
Oh, from what visions I awake !

XXI

Once more, once more upon the shore !
Now back the rolling ocean flows :
The rocky bed now far before
On the receding water grows—
The treasures and the wealth it owes
To human misery—all in view ;
Fate all on me at once bestows,
From thousands robbed and murdered too.

XXII

But, lo ! whatever I can find
Grows mean and worthless as I view ;
They promise, but they cheat the mind,
As promises are born to do.
How lovely every form and hue,
Till seized and mastered—Then arise ;
For all that admiration drew,
All that our senses can despise !

XXIII

Within the basis of a tower,
I saw a plant—it graced the spot ;
There was within nor wind nor shower,
And this had life that flowers have not.
I drew it forth—Ah, luckless lot !
It was the mandrake : and the sound
Of anguish deeply smothered shot
Into my breast with pang profound.

XXIV

"I would I were a soaring bird,"
Said Folly, "and I then would fly:"
Some mocking Muse or Fairy heard—
"You can but fall—suppose you try!
And though you may not mount the sky,
You will not grovel in the mire."
Hail, words of comfort! Now can I
Spurn earth, and to the air aspire.

XXV

And this, before, might I have done
If I had courage—that is all:
'Tis easier now to soar than run;
Up! up!—we neither tire nor fall.
Children of dust, be yours to crawl
On the vile earth!—while, happier, I
Must listen to an inward call,
That bids me mount, that makes me fly.

XXVI

I tumble from the loftiest tower,
Yet evil have I never found;
Supported by some favouring power,
I come in safety to the ground.
I rest upon the sea, the sound
Of many waters in mine ear,
Yet have no dread of being drowned,
But see my way, and cease to fear.

XXVII

Awake, there is no living man
Who may my fixed spirit shake;
But, sleeping, there is one who can,
And oft does he the trial make:

Against his might resolves I take,
And him oppose with high disdain;
But quickly all my powers forsake
My mind, and I resume my chain.

XXVIII

I know not how, but I am brought
Into a large and Gothic hall,
Seated with those I never sought—
Kings, Caliphs, Kaisers,—silent all;
Pale as the dead; enrobed and tall,
Majestic, frozen, solemn, still;
They wake my fears, my wits appal,
And with both scorn and terror fill.

XXIX

Now are they seated at a board
In that cold grandeur—I am there.
But what can mummied kings afford?
This is their meagre ghostly fare,
And proves what fleshless things they stare!
Yes! I am seated with the dead:
How great, and yet how mean they are!
Yes! I can scorn them while I dread.

XXX

They're gone!—and in their room I see
A fairy being, form and dress
Brilliant as light; nor can there be
On earth that heavenly loveliness;
Nor words can that sweet look express,
Or tell what living gems adorn
That wondrous beauty: who can guess
Where such celestial charms were born?

XXXI

Yet, as I wonder and admire,
The grace is gone, the glory dead;
And now it is but mean attire
Upon a shrivelled beldame spread,
Laid loathsome on a pauper's bed,
Where wretchedness and woe are found,
And the faint putrid odour shed
By all that's foul and base around!

XXXII

A garden this? oh! lovely breeze!
Oh! flowers that with such freshness bloom!—
Flowers shall I call such forms as these,
Or this delicious air perfume?
Oh! this from better worlds must come,
On earth such beauty who can meet?
No! this is not the native home
Of things so pure, so bright, so sweet!

XXXIII

Where? where?—am I reduced to this—
Thus sunk in poverty extreme?
Can I not these vile things dismiss?
No! they are things that more than seem:
This room with that cross-parting beam
Holds yonder squalid tribe and me—
But they were ever thus, nor dream
Of being wealthy, favoured, free!—

XXXIV

Shall I a coat and badge receive
And sit among these crippled men,
And not go forth without the leave
Of him—and ask it humbly then—

Who reigns in this infernal den—
Where all beside in woe repine?
Yes, yes, I must: nor tongue nor pen
Can paint such misery as mine!

XXXV

Wretches! if ye were only poor,
You would my sympathy engage;
Or were ye vicious, and no more,
I might be filled with manly rage;
Or had ye patience, wise and sage
We might such worthy sufferers call;
But ye are birds that suit your cage—
Poor, vile, impatient, worthless all!

XXXVI

How came I hither? Oh, that Hag!
'Tis she the enchanting spell prepares;
By cruel witchcraft she can drag
My struggling being in her snares;
Oh, how triumphantly she glares!
But yet would leave me, could I make
Strong effort to subdue my cares.—
'Tis MADE!—and I to freedom wake!

## THE FRANK COURTSHIP

(*From "Tales"*)

Grave *Jonas Kindred*, Sybil Kindred's sire,
Was six feet high, and looked six inches higher;
[1] Erect, morose, determined, solemn, slow,
Who knew the man could never cease to know:
His faithful spouse, when Jonas was not by,
Had a firm presence and a steady eye;
But with her husband dropped her look and tone,
And Jonas ruled unquestioned and alone.

He read, and oft would quote the sacred words,
How pious husbands of their wives were lords;
Sarah called Abraham Lord! and who could be,
So Jonas thought, a greater man than he?
Himself he viewed with undisguised respect,
And never pardoned freedom or neglect.

They had one daughter, and this favourite child
Had oft the father of his spleen beguiled;
Soothed by attention from her early years,
She gained all wishes by her smiles or tears:
But *Sybil* then was in that playful time,
When contradiction is not held a crime;
When parents yield their children idle praise
For faults corrected in their after days.

[1] Perhaps a reminiscence of Goldsmith's "Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow."

Peace in the sober house of Jonas dwelt,
Where each his duty and his station felt:
Yet not that peace some favoured mortals find,
In equal views and harmony of mind;
Not the soft peace that blesses those who love,
Where all with one consent in union move;
But it was that which one superior will
Commands, by making all inferiors still;
Who bids all murmurs, all objections cease,
And with imperious voice announces—Peace!

They were, to wit, a remnant of that crew,
Who, as their foes maintain, their Sovereign slew;
An independent race, precise, correct,
Who ever married in the kindred sect:
No son or daughter of their order wed
A friend to England's king who lost his head;
Cromwell was still their Saint, and when they met,
They mourned that Saints were not our rulers yet.

Fixed were their habits; they arose betimes,
Then prayed their hour, and sang their party-rhymes:
Their meals were plenteous, regular and plain;
The trade of Jonas brought him constant gain;
Vendor of hops and malt, of coals and corn—
And, like his father, he was merchant born:
Neat was their house; each table, chair, and stool,
Stood in its place, or moving moved by rule;

No lively print or picture graced the room;
A plain brown paper lent its decent gloom;
But here the eye, in glancing round, surveyed
A small recess that seemed for china made;
Such pleasing pictures seemed this pencilled ware,
That few would search for nobler objects there—
Yet, turned by chosen friends, and there appeared
His stern, strong features, whom they all revered;
For there in lofty air was seen to stand
The bold Protector of the conquered land;
Drawn in that look with which he wept and swore,
Turned out the Members, and made fast the door,
Ridding the House of every knave and drone,
Forced, though it grieved his soul, to rule alone.
The stern still smile each friend approving gave,
Then turned the view, and all again were grave.

There stood a clock, though small the owner's need,
For habit told when all things should proceed;
Few their amusements, but when friends appeared,
They with the world's distress their spirits cheered;
The nation's guilt, that would not long endure
The reign of men so modest and so pure:
Their town was large, and seldom passed a day
But some had failed, and others gone astray;
Clerks had absconded, wives eloped, girls flown
To Gretna-Green, or sons rebellious grown;

Quarrels and fires arose;—and it was plain
The times were bad; the Saints had ceased to reign!
A few yet lived, to languish and to mourn
For good old manners never to return.

Jonas had sisters, and of these was one
Who lost a husband and an only son:
Twelve months her sables she in sorrow wore,
And mourned so long that she could mourn no more.
Distant from Jonas, and from all her race,
She now resided in a lively place;
There, by the sect unseen, at whist she played,
Nor was of churchmen or their church afraid:
If much of this the graver brother heard,
He something censured, but he little feared;
He knew her rich and frugal; for the rest,
He felt no care, or, if he felt, suppressed:
Nor for companion when she asked her Niece,
Had he suspicions that disturbed his peace;
Frugal and rich, these virtues as a charm
Preserved the thoughtful man from all alarm;
An infant yet, she soon would home return,
Nor stay the manners of the world to learn;
Meantime his boys would all his care engross,
And be his comforts if he felt the loss.

The sprightly *Sybil*, pleased and unconfined,
Felt the pure pleasure of the opening mind:
All here was gay and cheerful—all at home
Unvaried quiet and unruffled gloom:
There were no changes, and amusements few;—
Here all was varied, wonderful, and new;

There were plain meals, plain dresses, and grave looks—
Here, gay companions and amusing books;
And the young Beauty soon began to taste
The light vocations of the scene she graced.

A man of business feels it as a crime
On calls domestic to consume his time;
Yet this grave man had not so cold a heart,
But with his daughter he was grieved to part:
And he demanded that in every year
The Aunt and Niece should at his house appear.

"Yes! we must go, my child, and by our dress
A grave conformity of mind express;
Must sing at meeting, and from cards refrain,
The more to enjoy when we return again."

Thus spake the Aunt, and the discerning child
Was pleased to learn how fathers are beguiled.
Her artful part the young dissembler took,
And from the matron caught the approving look:
When thrice the friends had met, excuse was sent
For more delay, and Jonas was content;
Till a tall maiden by her sire was seen,
In all the bloom and beauty of sixteen;
He gazed admiring;—she, with visage prim,
Glanced an arch look of gravity on him;
For she was gay at heart, but wore disguise,
And stood a vestal in her father's eyes:
Pure, pensive, simple, sad; the damsel's heart,
When Jonas praised, reproved her for the part;

For Sybil, fond of pleasure, gay and light,
Had still a secret bias to the right;
Vain as she was—and flattery made her vain—
Her simulation gave her bosom pain.

Again returned, the Matron and the Niece
Found the late quiet gave their joy increase;
The aunt infirm, no more her visits paid,
But still with her sojourned the favourite maid.
Letters were sent when franks could be procured,
And when they could not, silence was endured;
All were in health, and if they older grew,
It seemed a fact that none among them knew;
The aunt and niece still led a pleasant life,
And quiet days had Jonas and his wife.

Near him a Widow dwelt of worthy fame,
Like his her manners, and her creed the same;
The wealth her husband left, her care retained
For one tall Youth, and widow she remained;
His love respectful all her care repaid,
Her wishes watched, and her commands obeyed.

Sober he was and grave from early youth,
Mindful of forms, but more intent on truth;
In a light drab he uniformly dressed,
And look serene the unruffled mind expressed;
A hat with ample verge his brows o'erspread,
And his brown locks curled graceful on his head;
Yet might observers in his speaking eye
Some observation, some acuteness spy;
The friendly thought it keen, the treacherous deemed it sly;

Yet not a crime could foe or friend detect,
His actions all were, like his speech, correct;
And they who jested on a mind so sound,
Upon his virtues must their laughter found;
Chaste, sober, solemn, and devout they named
Him who was thus, and not of *this* ashamed.

Such were the virtues Jonas found in one
In whom he warmly wished to find a son:
Three years had passed since he had Sybil seen;
But she was doubtless what she once had been,
Lovely and mild, obedient and discreet;
The pair must love whenever they should meet;
Then ere the widow or her son should choose
Some happier maid, he would explain his views:
Now she, like him, was politic and shrewd,
With strong desire of lawful gain embued;
To all he said, she bowed with much respect,
Pleased to comply, yet seeming to reject;
Cool and yet eager, each admired the strength
Of the opponent, and agreed at length:
As a drawn battle shows to each a force,
Powerful as his, he honours it of course;
So in these neighbours, each the power discerned,
And gave the praise that was to each returned.

Jonas now asked his daughter—and the Aunt,
Though loth to lose her, was obliged to grant:—
But would not Sybil to the matron cling,
And fear to leave the shelter of her wing?
No! in the young there lives a love of change,
And to the easy they prefer the strange!
Then, too, the joys she once pursued with zeal,
From whist and visits sprung, she ceased to
feel:

When with the matrons Sybil first sat down,
To cut for partners and to stake her crown,
This to the youthful maid preferment seemed,
Who thought what woman she was then esteemed;
But in few years, when she perceived, indeed,
The real woman to the girl succeed,
No longer tricks and honours filled her mind,
But other feelings, not so well defined;
She then reluctant grew, and thought it hard
To sit and ponder o'er an ugly card;
Rather the nut-tree shade the nymph preferred,
Pleased with the pensive gloom and evening bird;
Thither, from company retired, she took
The silent walk, or read the favourite book.

The father's letter, sudden, short, and kind,
Awaked her wonder, and disturbed her mind;
She found new dreams upon her fancy seize,
Wild roving thoughts and endless reveries:
The parting came;—and when the Aunt perceived
The tears of Sybil, and how much she grieved—
To love for her that tender grief she laid,
That various, soft, contending passions made.

When Sybil rested in her father's arms,
His pride exulted in a daughter's charms;
A maid accomplished he was pleased to find,
Nor seemed the form more lovely than the mind:
But when the fit of pride and fondness fled,
He saw his judgment by his hopes misled;
High were the lady's spirits, far more free
Her mode of speaking than a maid's should be;

Too much, as Jonas thought, she seemed to know,
And all her knowledge was disposed to show;
"Too gay her dress, like theirs who idly dote
On a young coxcomb, or a coxcomb's coat;
In foolish spirits when our friends appear,
And vainly grave when not a man is near."

Thus Jonas, adding to his sorrow blame,
And terms disdainful to a Sister's name:—
"The sinful wretch has by her arts defiled
The ductile spirit of my darling child."

"The maid is virtuous," said the dame—Quoth he,
"Let her give proof, by acting virtuously:
Is it in gaping when the Elders pray?
In reading nonsense half a summer's day?
In those mock forms that she delights to trace,
Or her loud laughs in Hezekiah's face?
She—O Susannah!—to the world belongs;
She loves the follies of its idle throngs,
And reads soft tales of love, and sings love's softening songs.
But, as our friend is yet delayed in town,
We must prepare her till the Youth comes down:
You shall advise the maiden; I will threat;
Her fears and hopes may yield us comfort yet."

Now the grave father took the lass aside,
Demanding sternly, "Wilt thou be a bride?"
She answered, calling up an air sedate,
"I have not vowed against the holy state."

"No folly, Sybil," said the parent; "know
What to their parents virtuous maidens owe:
A worthy, wealthy youth, whom I approve,
Must thou prepare to honour and to love.
Formal to thee his air and dress may seem,
But the good youth is worthy of esteem:
Shouldst thou with rudeness treat him; of disdain
Should he with justice or of slight complain,
Or of one taunting speech give certain proof,
Girl! I reject thee from my sober roof."

"My aunt," said Sybil, "will with pride
protect
One whom a father can for this reject;
Nor shall a formal, rigid, soul-less boy
My manners alter, or my views destroy!"

Jonas then lifted up his hands on high,
And, uttering something 'twixt a groan and sigh,
Left the determined maid, her doubtful mother
by.

"Hear me," she said; "incline thy heart,
my child,
And fix thy fancy on a man so mild:
Thy father, Sybil, never could be moved
By one who loved him, or by one he loved.
Union like ours is but a bargain made
By slave and tyrant—he will be obeyed;
Then calls the quiet, comfort—but thy Youth
Is mild by nature, and as frank as truth."

"But will he love?" said Sybil; "I am told
That these mild creatures are by nature cold."

"Alas!" the matron answered, "much I dread
That dangerous love by which the young are led!
That love is earthy; you the creature prize,
And trust your feelings and believe your eyes:
Can eyes and feelings inward worth descry?
No! my fair daughter, on our choice rely!
Your love, like that displayed upon the stage,
Indulged is folly, and opposed is rage;—
More prudent love our sober couples show,
All that to mortal beings, mortals owe;
All flesh is grass—before you give a heart,
Remember, Sybil, that in death you part;
And should your husband die before your love,
What needless anguish must a widow prove!
No! my fair child, let all such visions cease;
Yield but esteem, and only try for peace."

"I must be loved," said Sybil; "I must see
The man in terrors who aspires to me;
At my forbidding frown his heart must ache,
His tongue must falter, and his frame must shake:
And if I grant him at my feet to kneel,
What trembling, fearful pleasure must he feel;
Nay, such the raptures that my smiles inspire,
That reason's self must for a time retire."

"Alas! for good *Josiah*," said the dame,
"These wicked thoughts would fill his soul with shame;
He kneel and tremble at a thing of dust!
He cannot, child:"—the Child replied, "He must."

They ceased : the matron left her with a frown ;
So Jonas met her when the Youth came down :
" Behold," said he, " thy future spouse attends ;
Receive him, daughter, as the best of friends ;
Observe, respect him—humble be each word,
That welcomes home thy husband and thy lord."

Forewarned, thought Sybil, with a bitter smile,
I shall prepare my manner and my style.

Ere yet Josiah entered on his task,
The father met him—" Deign to wear a mask
A few dull days, Josiah—but a few—
It is our duty, and the sex's due ;
I wore it once, and every grateful wife
Repays it with obedience through her life :
Have no regard to Sybil's dress, have none
To her pert language, to her flippant tone ;
Henceforward thou shalt rule unquestioned and alone ;
And she thy pleasure in thy looks shall seek—
How she shall dress, and whether she may speak."

A sober smile returned the Youth, and said,
" Can I cause fear, who am myself afraid ? "

Sybil, meantime, sat thoughtful in her room,
And often wondered — " Will the creature come ?
Nothing shall tempt, shall force me to bestow
My hand upon him,—yet I wish to know."

The door unclosed, and she beheld her sire
Lead in the Youth, then hasten to retire;
"Daughter, my friend—my daughter, friend," he cried,
And gave a meaning look, and stepped aside:
That look contained a mingled threat and prayer,
"Do take him, child—offend him, if you dare."

The couple gazed—were silent, and the maid
Looked in his face, to make the man afraid;
The man, unmoved, upon the maiden cast
A steady view—so salutation passed:
But in this instant Sybil's eye had seen
The tall fair person, and the still staid mien;
The glow that temperance o'er the cheek had spread,
Where the soft down half veiled the purest red;
And the serene deportment that proclaimed
A heart unspotted, and a life unblamed:
But then with these she saw attire too plain,
The pale brown coat, though worn without a stain;
The formal air, and something of the pride
That indicates the wealth it seems to hide;
And looks that were not, she conceived, exempt
From a proud pity, or a sly contempt.

Josiah's eyes had their employment too,
Engaged and softened by so bright a view;
A fair and meaning face, an eye of fire,
That checked the bold, and made the free retire:
But then with these he marked the studied dress
And lofty air, that scorn or pride express;

With that insidious look, that seemed to hide
In an affected smile the scorn and pride;
And if his mind the virgin's meaning caught,
He saw a foe with treacherous purpose fraught—
Captive the heart to take, and to reject it,
caught.

Silent they sat—thought Sybil, that he seeks
Something, no doubt; I wonder if he speaks:
Scarcely she wondered, when these accents fell
Slow in her ear—"Fair maiden, art thou well?"
"Art thou physician?" she replied; "my hand,
My pulse, at least, shall be at thy command."

She said—and saw, surprised, Josiah kneel,
And gave his lips the offered pulse to feel;
The rosy colour rising in her cheek,
Seemed that surprise unmixed with wrath to
speak;
Then sternness she assumed, and—"Doctor,
tell;
Thy words cannot alarm me—am I well?"

"Thou art," said he; "and yet thy dress so
light,
I do conceive, some danger must excite:"
"In whom?" said Sybil, with a look demure:
"In more," said he, "than I expect to cure;—
I, in thy light luxuriant robe, behold
Want and excess, abounding and yet cold;
Here needed, there displayed, in many a wanton
fold:
Both health and beauty, learned authors show,
From a just medium in our clothing flow."

"Proceed, good doctor; if so great my need,
What is thy fee? Good doctor! pray proceed."

"Large is my fee, fair lady, but I take
None till some progress in my cure I make:
Thou hast disease, fair maiden; thou art vain;
Within that face sit insult and disdain;
Thou art enamoured of thyself; my art
Can see the naughty malice of thy heart:
With a strong pleasure would thy bosom move,
Were I to own thy power, and ask thy love;
And such thy beauty, damsel, that I might,
But for thy pride, feel danger in thy sight,
And lose my present peace in dreams of vain
delight."

"And can thy patients," said the nymph,
"endure
Physic like this? and will it work a cure?"

"Such is my hope, fair damsel; thou, I find,
Hast the true tokens of a noble mind;
But the world wins thee, Sybil, and thy joys
Are placed in trifles, fashions, follies, toys;
Thou hast sought pleasure in the world around,
That in thine own pure bosom should be found;
Did all that world admire thee, praise and love,
Could it the least of nature's pains remove?
Could it for errors, follies, sins atone,
Or give thee comfort, thoughtful and alone?
It has, believe me, maid, no power to charm
Thy soul from sorrow, or thy flesh from harm:
Turn then, fair creature, from a world of sin,
And seek the jewel happiness within."

"Speak'st thou at meeting?" said the nymph;
"thy speech
Is that of mortal very prone to teach;
But wouldst thou, doctor, from the patient learn
Thine own disease?—The cure is thy concern."

"Yea, with good will."—"Then know 'tis thy complaint,
That, for a sinner, thou art too much a saint;
Hast too much show of the sedate and pure,
And without cause art formal and demure:
This makes a man unsocial, unpolite;
Odious when wrong, and insolent if right.
Thou mayst be good, but why should goodness be
Wrapt in a garb of such formality?
Thy person well might please a damsel's eye,
In decent habit with a scarlet dye;
But, jest apart—what virtue canst thou trace
In that broad brim that hides thy sober face?
Does that long-skirted drab, that over-nice
And formal clothing, prove a scorn of vice?
Then for thine accent—what in sound can be
So void of grace as dull monotony?
Love has a thousand varied notes to move
The human heart:—thou mayst not speak of love
Till thou hast cast thy formal ways aside,
And those becoming youth and nature tried:
Not till exterior freedom, spirit, ease,
Prove it thy study and delight to please;
Not till these follies meet thy just disdain,
While yet thy virtues and thy worth remain."

"This is severe!—Oh! maiden, wilt not thou
Something for habits, manners, modes, allow?"—

"Yes! but allowing much, I much require,
In my behalf, for manners, modes, attire!"

"True, lovely Sybil; and, this point agreed,
Let me to those of greater weight proceed:
Thy father!"—"Nay," she quickly interposed,
Good doctor, here our conference is closed!"

Then left the Youth, who, lost in his retreat,
Passed the good matron on her garden-seat;
His looks were troubled, and his air, once mild
And calm, was hurried:—"My audacious child!"
Exclaimed the dame, "I read what she has done
In thy displeasure—Ah! the thoughtless one:
But yet, Josiah, to my stern good man
Speak of the maid as mildly as you can:
Can you not seem to woo a little while
The daughter's will, the father to beguile?
So that his wrath in time may wear away;
Will you preserve our peace, Josiah? say."

"Yes! my good neighbour," said the gentle youth,
"Rely securely on my care and truth;
And should thy comfort with my efforts cease,
And only then,—perpetual is thy peace."

The dame had doubts: she well his virtues knew,
His deeds were friendly, and his words were true:
"But to address this vixen is a task
He is ashamed to take, and I to ask."

Soon as the father from Josiah learned
What pass'd with Sybil, he the truth discerned.
"He loves," the man exclaimed, "he loves, 'tis plain,
The thoughtless girl, and shall he love in vain?
She may be stubborn, but she shall be tried,
Born as she is of wilfulness and pride."

With anger fraught, but willing to persuade,
The wrathful father met the smiling maid:
"Sybil," said he, "I long, and yet I dread
To know thy conduct—hath Josiah fled?
And, grieved and fretted by thy scornful air,
For his lost peace, betaken him to prayer?
Couldst thou his pure and modest mind distress
By vile remarks upon his speech, address,
Attire, and voice?"—"All this I must confess."
"Unhappy child! what labour will it cost
To win him back!"—"I do not think him lost."
"Courts he then (trifler!) insult and disdain?"—
"No; but from these he courts me to refrain."
"Then hear me, Sybil: should Josiah leave
Thy father's house?"—"My father's child would grieve."
"That is of grace, and if he come again
To speak of love?"—"I might from grief refrain."
"Then wilt thou, daughter, our design embrace?"—
"Can I resist it, if it be of grace?"
"Dear child! in three plain words thy mind express:
Wilt thou have this good youth?"—"Dear father! Yes."

## THE MOTHER

(*From "Tales"*)

THERE was a worthy, but a simple Pair,
Who nursed a Daughter, fairest of the fair:
Sons they had lost, and she alone remained,
Heir to the kindness they had all obtained;
Heir to the fortune they designed for all,
Nor had the allotted portion then been small;
But now, by fate enriched with beauty rare,
They watched their treasure with peculiar care:
The fairest features they could early trace,
And, blind with love, saw merit in her face—
Saw virtue, wisdom, dignity, and grace;
And *Dorothea*, from her infant years,
Gained all her wishes from their pride or fears;
She wrote a billet, and a novel read,
And with her fame her vanity was fed;
Each word, each look, each action was a cause
For flattering wonder and for fond applause;
She rode or danced, and ever glanced around,
Seeking for praise, and smiling when she found.
The yielding pair to her petitions gave
An humble friend to be a civil slave,
Who for a poor support herself resign'd
To the base foil of a dependent mind:
By nature cold, our Heiress stooped to art,
To gain the credit of a tender heart.
Hence at her door must suppliant paupers stand,
To bless the bounty of her beauteous hand:

And now, her education all complete,
She talked of virtuous love and union sweet;
She was indeed by no soft passion moved,
But wished, with all her soul, to be beloved.
Here, on the favoured beauty Fortune smiled;
Her chosen Husband was a man so mild,
So humbly tempered, so intent to please.
It quite distressed her to remain at ease,
Without a cause to sigh, without pretence to tease:
She tried his patience in a thousand modes,
And tired it not upon the roughest roads.
Pleasure she sought, and, disappointed, sighed
For joys, she said, "to her alone denied;"
And she was "sure her parents, if alive,
Would many comforts for their child contrive:"
The gentle Husband bade her name him one;
"No—that," she answered, "should for her be done;
How could she say what pleasures were around?
But she was certain many might be found."
"Would she some seaport, Weymouth, Scarborough, grace?"—
"He knew she hated every watering-place."
"The town?"—"What! now 'twas empty, joyless, dull?"
"In winter?"—"No; she liked it worse when full."
She talked of building—"Would she plan a room?"—
"No! she could live, as he desired, in gloom."

"Call then our friends and neighbours."—"He might call,
And they might come and fill his ugly hall;
A noisy vulgar set, he knew she scorned them all."
"Then might their two dear girls the time employ,
And their improvement yield a solid joy."—
"Solid indeed! and heavy—oh! the bliss
Of teaching letters to a lisping miss!"
"My dear, my gentle Dorothea, say,
Can I oblige you?"—"You may go away."

Twelve heavy years this patient soul sustained
This wasp's attacks, and then her praise obtained,
Graved on a marble tomb, where he at peace remained.

Two daughters wept their loss; the one a child
With a plain face, strong sense, and temper mild,
Who keenly felt the Mother's angry taunt,
"Thou art the image of thy pious Aunt:"
Long time had *Lucy* wept her slighted face,
And then began to smile at her disgrace.
Her father's sister, who the world had seen
Near sixty years when Lucy saw sixteen,
Begged the plain girl: the gracious Mother smiled,
And freely gave her grieved but passive child;
And with her elder-born, the beauty blessed,
This parent rested, if such minds can rest:
No miss her waxen babe could so admire,
Nurse with such care, or with such pride attire;

They were companions meet, with equal mind,
Blessed with one love, and to one point inclined;
Beauty to keep, adorn, increase, and guard,
Was their sole care, and had its full reward:
In rising splendour with the one it reigned,
And in the other was by care sustained,
The daughter's charms increased, the parent's
yet remained.

Leave we these ladies to their daily care,
To see how meekness and discretion fare:—
A village maid, unvexed by want or love,
Could not with more delight than Lucy move;
The village lark, high mounted in the spring,
Could not with purer joy than Lucy sing;
Her cares all light, her pleasures all sincere,
Her duty joy, and her companion dear;
In tender friendship and in true respect
Lived Aunt and Niece, no flattery, no neglect—
They read, walked, visited—together prayed,
Together slept the matron and the maid:
There was such goodness, such pure nature seen
In Lucy's looks, a manner so serene;
Such harmony in motion, speech, and air,
That without fairness she was more than fair,
Had more than beauty in each speaking grace,
That lent their cloudless glory to the face;
Where mild good sense in placid looks were
shown,
And felt in every bosom but her own.
The one presiding feature in her mind
Was the pure meekness of a will resigned;
A tender spirit, freed from all pretence
Of wit, and pleased in mild benevolence;

Blessed in protecting fondness she reposed,
With every wish indulged though undisclosed?
But Love, like zephyr on the limpid lake,
Was now the bosom of the maid to shake,
And in that gentle mind a gentle strife to make.

Among their chosen friends, a favoured few
The aunt and niece a youthful Rector knew;
Who, though a younger brother, might address
A younger sister, fearless of success;
His friends, a lofty race, their native pride
At first displayed, and their assent denied:
But, pleased such virtues and such love to trace,
They owned she would adorn the loftiest race.
The Aunt, a mother's caution to supply,
Had watched the youthful priest with jealous eye;
And, anxious for her charge, had viewed unseen
The cautious life that keeps the conscience clean:
In all she found him all she wished to find,
With slight exception of a lofty mind:
A certain manner that expressed desire
To be received as brother to the 'Squire.
Lucy's meek eye had beamed with many a tear,
Lucy's soft heart had beat with many a fear,
Before he told (although his looks, she thought,
Had oft confessed) that he her favour sought;
But when he kneeled, (she wished him not to kneel,)
And spoke the fears and hopes that lovers feel;
When too the prudent aunt herself confessed
Her wishes on the gentle youth would rest;
The maiden's eye with tender passion beamed,
She dwelt with fondness on the life she schemed;

The household cares, the soft and lasting ties
Of love, with all his binding charities ;
Their village taught, consoled, assisted, fed,
Till the young zealot tears of pleasure shed.

But would her Mother ? Ah ! she feared it wrong
To have indulged these forward hopes so long ;
Her mother loved, but was not used to grant
Favours so freely as her gentle aunt.—
Her gentle aunt, with smiles that angels wear,
Dispelled her Lucy's apprehensive tear :
Her prudent foresight the request had made
To one whom none could govern, few persuade ;
She doubted much if one in earnest wooed
A girl with not a single charm endued ;
The Sister's nobler views she then declared,
And what small sum for Lucy could be spared ;
"If more than this the foolish priest requires,
Tell him," she wrote, "to check his vain desires."
At length, with many a cold expression mixed,
With many a sneer on girls so fondly fixed,
There came a promise—should they not repent,
But take with grateful minds the portion meant,
And wait the Sister's day—the Mother might consent.

And here, might pitying hope o'er truth prevail,
Or love o'er fortune, we would end our tale ;
For who more blessed than youthful pair removed
From fear of want—by mutual friends approved—

Short time to wait, and in that time to live
With all the pleasures hope and fancy give;
Their equal passion raised on just esteem,
When reason sanctions all that love can dream?

Yes! reason sanctions what stern fate denies:
The early prospect in the glory dies,
As the soft smiles on dying infants play
In their mild features, and then pass away.

The *Beauty* died ere she could yield her hand
In the high marriage by the Mother planned;
Who grieved indeed, but found a vast relief
In a cold heart, that ever warred with grief.

Lucy was present when her sister died,
Heiress to duties that she ill supplied:
There were no mutual feelings, sister arts,
No kindred taste, nor intercourse of hearts:
When in the mirror played the matron's smile,
The maiden's thoughts were travelling all the while;
And when desired to speak, she sighed to find
Her pause offended; "Envy made her blind:
Tasteless she was, nor had a claim in life
Above the station of a rector's wife;
Yet as an heiress, she must shun disgrace,
Although no heiress to her mother's face:
It is your duty," said the imperious dame,
"(Advanced your fortune,) to advance your name,
And with superior rank, superior offers claim:
Your sister's lover, when his sorrows die,
May look upon you, and for favour sigh;

Nor can you offer a reluctant hand ;
His birth is noble, and his seat is grand."
Alarmed was Lucy, was in tears—" A fool !
Was she a child in love ?—a miss at school ?
Doubts any mortal, if a change of state
Dissolves all claims and ties of earlier date ? "

The Rector doubted, for he came to mourn
A sister dead, and with a wife return :
Lucy with heart unchanged received the youth,
True in herself, confiding in his truth ;
But owned her mother's change ; the haughty dame
Poured strong contempt upon the youthful flame ;
She firmly vowed her purpose to pursue,
Judged her own cause, and bade the youth adieu !
The lover begged, insisted, urged his pain,
His brother wrote to threaten and complain ;
Her sister reasoning proved the promise made,
Lucy appealing to a parent prayed ;
But all opposed the event that she designed,
And all in vain—she never changed her mind ;
But coldly answered in her wonted way,
That she " would rule, and Lucy must obey."

With peevish fear, she saw her health decline,
And cried, " Oh ! monstrous, for a man to pine !
But if your foolish heart must yield to love,
Let him possess it whom I now approve ;
This is my pleasure."—Still the Rector came
With larger offers and with bolder claim ;
But the stern lady would attend no more—
She frowned, and rudely pointed to the door ;

Whate'er he wrote, he saw unread returned,
And he, indignant, the dishonour spurned:
Nay, fixed suspicion where he might confide,
And sacrificed his passion to his pride.

Lucy, meantime, though threatened and distressed;
Against her marriage made a strong protest:
All was domestic war; the Aunt rebelled
Against the sovereign will, and was expelled;
And every power was tried, and every art,
To bend to falsehood one determined heart;
Assailed, in patience it received the shock,
Soft as the wave, unshaken as the rock:
But while the unconquered soul endures the storm
Of angry fate, it preys upon the form;
With conscious virtue she resisted still,
And conscious love gave vigour to her will:
But Lucy's trial was at hand; with joy
The Mother cried—"Behold your constant boy—
Thursday — was married: — take the paper, sweet,
And read the conduct of your reverend cheat;
See with what pomp of coaches, in what crowd
The creature married—of his falsehood proud!
False, did I say?—at least no whining fool;
And thus will hopeless passions ever cool:
But shall his bride your single state reproach?
No! give him crowd for crowd, and coach for coach.
Oh! you retire; reflect then, gentle miss,
And gain some spirit in a cause like this."

Some spirit Lucy gained; a steady soul,
Defying all persuasion, all control:
In vain reproach, derision, threats were tried;
The constant mind all outward force defied,
By vengeance vainly urged, in vain assailed by pride;
Fixed in her purpose, perfect in her part,
She felt the courage of a wounded heart;
The world receded from her rising view,
When heaven approached as earthly things withdrew;
Not strange before, for in the days of love,
Joy, hope, and pleasure, she had thoughts above,
Pious when most of worldly prospects fond,
When they best pleased her she could look beyond:
Had the young priest a faithful lover died,
Something had been her bosom to divide;
Now heaven had all, for in her holiest views
She saw the matron whom she feared to lose;
While from her parent, the dejected maid
Forced the unpleasant thought, or thinking prayed.

Surprised, the Mother saw the languid frame,
And felt indignant, yet forbore to blame;
Once with a frown she cried, "And do you mean
To die of love—the folly of fifteen?"
But as her anger met with no reply,
She let the gentle girl in quiet die;
And to her sister wrote, impelled by pain,
"Come quickly, Martha, or you come in vain."
Lucy meantime professed with joy sincere,
That nothing held, employed, engaged her here.

"I am an humble actor, doomed to play
A part obscure, and then to glide away:
Incurious how the great or happy shine,
Or who have parts obscure and sad as mine;
In its best prospect I but wished for life,
To be the assiduous, gentle, useful wife;
That lost, with wearied mind, and spirit poor,
I drop my efforts, and can act no more;
With growing joy I feel my spirits tend
To that last scene where all my duties end."

Hope, ease, delight, the thoughts of dying gave,
Till Lucy spoke with fondness of the grave;
She smiled with wasted form, but spirit firm,
And said, "She left but little for the worm:"
As tolled the bell, "There's one," she said, "hath pressed
Awhile before me to the bed of rest:"
And she beside her with attention spread
The decorations of the maiden dead.

While quickly thus the mortal part declined,
The happiest visions filled the active mind;
A soft, religious melancholy gained
Entire possession, and for ever reigned:
On Holy Writ her mind reposing dwelt,
She saw the wonders, she the mercies felt.
Till, in a blessed and glorious reverie,
She seemed the Saviour as on earth to see,
And, filled with love divine, the attending friend to be;
Or she who trembling, yet confiding, stole
Near to the garment, touched it, and was whole

When, such the intenseness of the working thought,
On her it seem'd the very deed was wrought ;
She the glad patient's fear and rapture found,
The holy transport, and the healing wound ;
This was so fixed, so grafted in the heart,
That she adopted, nay became the part :
But one chief scene was present to her sight,
Her Saviour resting in the tomb by night ;
Her fever rose, and still her wedded mind
Was to that scene, that hallow'd cave, confined—
Where in the shade of death the body laid,
There watch'd the spirit of the wandering maid ;
Her looks were fixed, entranced, illumed, serene,
In the still glory of the midnight scene :
There at her Saviour's feet, in visions blessed,
The enraptured maid a sacred joy possessed ;
In patience waiting for the first-born ray
Of that all-glorious and triumphant day :
To this idea all her soul she gave,
Her mind reposing by the sacred grave ;
Then sleep would seal the eye, the vision close,
And steep the solemn thoughts in brief repose.

Then grew the soul serene, and all its powers
Again restored, illumed the dying hours ;
But reason dwelt where fancy strayed before,
And the mind wandered from its views no more ;
Till death approach'd, when every look expressed
A sense of bliss, till every sense had rest.

The mother lives, and has enough to buy
The attentive ear and the submissive eye
Of abject natures—these are daily told,
How triumphed beauty in the days of old ;
How, by her window seated, crowds have cast
Admiring glances, wondering as they pass'd ;
How from her carriage as she stepped to pray,
Divided ranks would humbly make her way ;
And how each voice in the astonished throng
Pronounced her peerless as she moved along.

Her picture then the greedy dame displays ;
Touch'd by no shame, she now demands its praise ;
In her tall mirror then she shows a face,
Still coldly fair with unaffecting grace ;
These she compares : "It has the form," she cries,
"But wants the air, the spirit, and the eyes ;
This, as a likeness, is correct and true,
But there alone the living grace we view."
This said, the applauding voice the Dame required,
And, gazing, slowly from the glass retired.

## EDWARD SHORE

(*From "Tales"*)

Genius ! thou gift of Heaven ! thou light divine !
Amid what dangers art thou doomed to shine !

Oft will the body's weakness check thy force,
Oft damp thy vigour, and impede thy course;
And trembling nerves compel thee to restrain
Thy nobler efforts, to contend with pain;
Or Want (sad guest!) will in thy presence come,
And breathe around her melancholy gloom:
To life's low cares will thy proud thought confine,
And make her sufferings, her impatience, thine.

Evil and strong, seducing passions prey
On soaring minds, and win them from their way,
Who then to Vice the subject spirits give,
And in the service of the conqueror live;
Like captive Samson making sport for all,
Who feared their strength, and glory in their fall.

Genius, with virtue, still may lack the aid
Implored by humble minds, and hearts afraid;
May leave to timid souls the shield and sword
Of the tried Faith, and the resistless Word;
Amid a world of dangers venturing forth,
Frail, but yet fearless, proud in conscious worth,
Till strong temptation, in some fatal time,
Assails the heart, and wins the soul to crime;
When left by honour, and by sorrow spent,
Unused to pray, unable to repent,
The nobler powers, that once exalted high
The aspiring man, shall then degraded lie:

Reason, through anguish, shall her throne forsake,
And strength of mind but stronger madness make.

When *Edward Shore* had reached his twentieth year,
He felt his bosom light, his conscience clear;
Applause at school the youthful hero gained,
And trials there with manly strength sustained:
With prospects bright upon the world he came,
Pure love of virtue, strong desire of fame:
Men watched the way his lofty mind would take,
And all foretold the progress he would make.

Boast of these friends, to older men a guide,
Proud of his parts, but gracious in his pride;
He bore a gay good-nature in his face,
And in his air were dignity and grace;
Dress that became his state and years he wore,
And sense and spirit shone in Edward Shore.

Thus, while admiring friends the Youth beheld,
His own disgust their forward hopes repelled;
For he unfixed, unfixing, looked around,
And no employment but in seeking found;
He gave his restless thoughts to views refined,
And shrank from worldly cares with wounded mind.

Rejecting trade, awhile he dwelt on laws,
"But who could plead, if unapproved the cause?"

A doubting, dismal tribe physicians seemed ;
Divines o'er texts and disputations dreamed ;
War and its glory he perhaps could love,
But there again he must the cause approve.

Our hero thought no deed should gain applause
Where timid virtue found support in laws ;
He to all good would soar, would fly all sin,
By the pure prompting of the will within ;
"Who needs a law that binds him not to steal,"
Asked the young teacher, "can he rightly feel ?
To curb the will, or arm in honour's cause,
Or aid the weak—are these enforced by laws ?
Should we a foul, ungenerous action dread,
Because a law condemns the adulterous bed ?
Or fly pollution, not for fear of stain,
But that some statute tells us to refrain ?
The grosser herd in ties like these we bind,
In virtue's freedom moves the enlightened mind."

"Man's heart deceives him," said a friend.—
"Of course,"
Replied the Youth ; "but has it power to force ?
Unless it forces, call it as you will,
It is but wish, and proneness to the ill."

"Art thou not tempted ?"—"Do I fall ?" said Shore.
"The pure have fallen."—"Then are pure no more.
While reason guides me, I shall walk aright,
Nor need a steadier hand, or stronger light ;
Nor this in dread of awful threats, designed
For the weak spirit and the grovelling mind ;

But that, engaged by thoughts and views sublime,
I wage free war with grossness and with crime."
Thus looked he proudly on the vulgar crew,
Whom statutes govern, and whom fears subdue.

Faith, with his virtue, he indeed professed,
But doubts deprived his ardent mind of rest;
Reason, his sovereign mistress, failed to show
Light through the mazes of the world below:
Questions arose, and they surpassed the skill
Of his sole aid, and would be dubious still;
These to discuss he sought no common guide,
But to the doubters in his doubts applied;
When all together might in freedom speak,
And their loved truth with mutual ardour seek.
Alas! though men who feel their eyes decay
Take more than common pains to find their way,
Yet, when for this they ask each other's aid,
Their mutual purpose is the more delayed:
Of all their doubts, their reasoning cleared not one,
Still the same spots were present in the sun;
Still the same scruples haunted Edward's mind,
Who found no rest, nor took no pains to find.

But though with shaken faith, and slave to fame,
Vain and aspiring on the world he came,
Yet was he studious, serious, moral, grave,
No passion's victim, and no system's slave:
Vice he opposed, indulgence he disdained,
And o'er each sense in conscious triumph reigned.

Who often reads will sometimes wish to write,
And Shore would yield instruction and delight:
A serious drama he designed, but found
'Twas tedious travelling in that gloomy ground;
A deep and solemn story he would try,
But grew ashamed of ghosts, and laid it by;
Sermons he wrote, but they who knew his creed,
Or knew it not, were ill-disposed to read;
And he would lastly be the nation's guide,
But, studying, failed to fix upon a side;
Fame he desired, and talents he possessed,
But loved not labour, though he could not rest,
Nor firmly fix the vacillating mind,
That, ever working, could no centre find.

'Tis thus a sanguine reader loves to trace
The Nile forth rushing on his glorious race;
Calm and secure the fancied traveller goes
Through sterile deserts and by threatening foes;
He thinks not then of Afric's scorching sands,
The Arabian sea, the Abyssinian bands;
Fasils[1] and Michaels, and the robbers all,
Whom we politely chiefs and heroes call:
He of success alone delights to think,
He views that fount, he stands upon the brink,
And drinks a fancied draught, exulting so to drink.

In his own room, and with his books around,
His lively mind its chief employment found;

[1] Crabbe's son explains that the reference is to James Bruce's *Abyssinian Travels*. Fasil was a chief who revolted against the King of Abyssinia. Michael commanded the royal army.

Then idly busy, quietly employed,
And, lost to life, his visions were enjoyed :
Yet still he took a keen enquiring view
Of all that crowds neglect, desire, pursue ;
And thus abstracted, curious, still, serene,
He, unemployed, beheld life's shifting scene ;
Still more averse from vulgar joys and cares,
Still more unfitted for the world's affairs.

There was a house where Edward oft-times went,
And social hours in pleasant trifling spent ;
He read, conversed, and reasoned, sang and played,
And all were happy while the idler stayed ;
Too happy one ! for thence arose the pain,
Till this engaging trifler came again.

But did he love ? We answer, day by day,
The loving feet would take the accustomed way,
The amorous eye would rove as if in quest
Of something rare, and on the mansion rest ;
The same soft passion touched the gentle tongue,
And *Anna's* charms in tender notes were sung ;
The ear, too, seemed to feel the common flame,
Soothed and delighted with the fair one's name ;
And thus, as love each other part possessed,
The heart, no doubt, its sovereign power confessed.

Pleased in her sight, the Youth required no more ;
Not rich himself, he saw the damsel poor ;
And he too wisely, nay, too kindly loved,
To pain the being whom his soul approved.

A serious Friend our cautious Youth possessed,
And at his table sat a welcome guest :
Both unemployed, it was their chief delight
To read what free and daring authors write ;
Authors who loved from common views to soar,
And seek the fountains never traced before :
Truth they professed, yet often left the true
And beaten prospect, for the wild and new.
His chosen friend his fiftieth year had seen,
His fortune easy, and his air serene ;
Deist and atheist called ; for few agreed
What were his notions, principles, or creed ;
His mind reposed not, for he hated rest,
But all things made a query or a jest ;
Perplexed himself, he ever sought to prove
That man is doomed in endless doubt to rove ;
Himself in darkness he professed to be,
And would maintain that not a man could see.

The youthful Friend, dissentient, reasoned still
Of the soul's prowess, and the subject-will ;
Of virtue's beauty, and of honour's force,
And a warm zeal gave life to his discourse :
Since from his feelings all his fire arose,
And he had interest in the themes he chose.

The Friend, indulging a sarcastic smile,
Said, " Dear enthusiast ! thou wilt change thy style,
When man's delusions, errors, crimes, deceit,
No more distress thee, and no longer cheat."

Yet, lo ! this cautious man, so coolly wise,
On a young Beauty fixed unguarded eyes ;

And her he married: Edward at the view
Bade to his cheerful visits long adieu;
But haply erred, for this engaging bride
No mirth suppressed, but rather cause supplied:
And when she saw the friends, by reasoning long,
Confused if right, and positive if wrong,
With playful speech, and smile that spoke delight,
She made them careless both of wrong and right.

This gentle damsel gave consent to wed,
With school and school-day dinners in her head:
She now was promised choice of daintiest food,
And costly dress, that made her sovereign good;
With walks on hilly heath to banish spleen,
And summer-visits when the roads were clean.
All these she loved, to these she gave consent,
And she was married to her heart's content.

Their manner this—the Friends together read,
Till books a cause for disputation bred;
Debate then followed, and the vapoured child
Declared they argued till her head was wild;
And strange to her it was that mortal brain
Could seek the trial, or endure the pain.

Then, as the Friend reposed, the younger pair
Sat down to cards, and played beside his chair;
Till he, awaking, to his books applied,
Or heard the music of the obedient bride:
If mild the evening, in the fields they strayed,
And their own flock with partial eye surveyed;
But oft the husband, to indulgence prone,
Resumed his book, and bade them walk alone.

"Do, my kind Edward—I must take mine ease—
Name the dear girl the planets and the trees:
Tell her what warblers pour their evening song,
What insects flutter, as you walk along;
Teach her to fix the roving thoughts, to bind
The wandering sense, and methodise the mind."

This was obeyed; and oft when this was done,
They calmly gazed on the declining sun;
In silence saw the glowing landscape fade,
Or, sitting, sang beneath the arbour's shade:
Till rose the moon, and on each youthful face
Shed a soft beauty and a dangerous grace.

When the young Wife beheld in long debate
The friends, all careless as she seeming sate,
It soon appeared there was in one combined
The nobler person and the richer mind:
He wore no wig, no grisly beard was seen,
And none beheld him careless or unclean,
Or watched him sleeping. We indeed have heard
Of sleeping beauty, and it has appeared;
'Tis seen in infants—there indeed we find
The features softened by the slumbering mind;
But other beauties, when disposed to sleep,
Should from the eye of keen inspector keep:
The lovely nymph who would her swain surprise,
May close her mouth, but not conceal her eyes;
Sleep from the fairest face some beauty takes,
And all the homely features homelier makes:
So thought our wife, beholding with a sigh
Her sleeping spouse, and Edward smiling by.

A sick relation for the husband sent;
Without delay the friendly sceptic went;
Nor feared the youthful pair, for he had seen
The wife untroubled, and the friend serene;
No selfish purpose in his roving eyes,
No vile deception in her fond replies:
So judged the husband, and with judgment true,
For neither yet the guilt or danger knew.

What now remained? but they again should play
The accustomed game, and walk the accustomed way;
With careless freedom should converse or read,
And the Friend's absence neither fear nor heed:
But rather now they seemed confused, constrained;
Within their room still restless they remained,
And painfully they felt, and knew each other pained.
Ah, foolish men! how could ye thus depend,
One on himself, the other on his friend?

The Youth with troubled eye the lady saw,
Yet felt too brave, too daring to withdraw;
While she, with tuneless hand the jarring keys
Touching, was not one moment at her ease:
Now would she walk, and call her friendly guide,
Now speak of rain, and cast her cloak aside;
Seize on a book, unconscious what she read,
And restless still to new resources fled;
Then laughed aloud, then tried to look serene;
And ever changed, and every change was seen.

Painful it is to dwell on deeds of shame—
The trying day was past, another came;
The third was all remorse, confusion, dread,
And (all too late!) the fallen hero fled.

Then felt the Youth, in that seducing time,
How feebly Honour guards the heart from crime:
Small is his native strength; man needs the stay,
The strength imparted in the trying day;
For all that Honour brings against the force
Of headlong passion, aids its rapid course;
Its slight resistance but provokes the fire,
As wood-work stops the flame, and then conveys it higher.

The Husband came; a wife by guilt made bold
Had, meeting, soothed him, as in days of old;
But soon this fact transpired; her strong distress,
And his Friend's absence, left him nought to guess.

Still cool, though grieved, thus prudence bade him write—
"I cannot pardon, and I will not fight;
Thou art too poor a culprit for the laws,
And I too faulty to support my cause:
All must be punished; I must sigh alone,
At home thy victim for her guilt atone;
And thou, unhappy! virtuous now no more,
Must loss of fame, peace, purity deplore;
Sinners with praise will pierce thee to the heart,
And saints, deriding, tell thee what thou art."

Such was his fall; and Edward from that time,
Felt in full force the censure and the crime—
Despised, ashamed; his noble views before,
And his proud thoughts, degraded him the more:
Should he repent—would that conceal his shame?
Could peace be his? It perished with his fame:
Himself he scorned, nor could his crime forgive;
He feared to die, yet felt ashamed to live:
Grieved, but not contrite, was his heart; oppressed,
Not broken; not converted, but distressed;
He wanted will to bend the stubborn knee,
He wanted light the cause of ill to see,
To learn how frail is man, how humble then should be;
For faith he had not, or a faith too weak
To gain the help that humbled sinners seek;
Else had he prayed—to an offended God
His tears had flown a penitential flood;
Though far astray, he would have heard the call
Of mercy—"Come! return, thou prodigal:"
Then, though confused, distressed, ashamed, afraid,
Still had the trembling penitent obeyed;
Though faith had fainted, when assailed by fear,
Hope to the soul had whispered, "Persevere!"
Till in his Father's house, an humbled guest,
He would have found forgiveness, comfort, rest.

But all this joy was to our Youth denied
By his fierce passions and his daring pride;

And shame and doubt impelled him in a course,
Once so abhorred, with unresisted force.
Proud minds and guilty, whom their crimes oppress,
Fly to new crimes for comfort and redress;
So found our fallen Youth a short relief
In wine, the opiate guilt applies to grief,—
From fleeting mirth that o'er the bottle lives,
From the false joy its inspiration gives,—
And from associates pleased to find a friend
With powers to lead them, gladden, and defend,
In all those scenes where transient ease is found,
For minds whom sins oppress and sorrows wound.

Wine is like anger; for it makes us strong,
Blind, and impatient, and it leads us wrong;
The strength is quickly lost, we feel the error long:
Thus led, thus strengthened, in an evil cause,
For folly pleading, sought the Youth applause;
Sad for a time, then eloquently wild,
He gaily spoke as his companions smiled;
Lightly he rose, and with his former grace
Proposed some doubt, and argued on the case;
Fate and foreknowledge were his favourite themes—
How vain man's purpose, how absurd his schemes:
"Whatever is, was ere our birth decreed;
We think our actions from ourselves proceed,
And idly we lament the inevitable deed;
It seems our own, but there's a power above
Directs the motion, nay, that makes us move;

Nor good nor evil can you beings name,
Who are but rooks and castles in the game;
Superior natures with their puppets play,
Till, bagged or buried, all are swept away."

Such were the notions of a mind to ill
Now prone, but ardent and determined still:
Of joy now eager, as before of fame,
And screened by folly when assailed by shame,
Deeply he sank; obeyed each passion's call,
And used his reason to defend them all.

Shall I proceed, and step by step relate
The odious progress of a Sinner's fate?
No—let me rather hasten to the time
(Sure to arrive!) when misery waits on crime.

With Virtue, prudence fled; what Shore possessed
Was sold, was spent, and he was now distressed:
And Want, unwelcome stranger, pale and wan,
Met with her haggard looks the hurried man:
His pride felt keenly what he must expect
From useless pity and from cold neglect.

Struck by new terrors, from his friends he fled,
And wept his woes upon a restless bed;
Retiring late, at early hour to rise,
With shrunken features, and with bloodshot eyes:
If sleep one moment closed the dismal view,
Fancy her terrors built upon the true:

And night and day had their alternate woes,
That baffled pleasure, and that mocked repose ;
Till to despair and anguish was consigned
The wreck and ruin of a noble mind.

Now seized for debt, and lodged within a jail,
He tried his friendships, and he found them fail ;
Then failed his spirits, and his thoughts were all
Fixed on his sins, his sufferings, and his fall :
His ruffled mind was pictured in his face,
Once the fair seat of dignity and grace :
Great was the danger of a man so prone
To think of madness, and to think alone ;
Yet pride still lived, and struggled to sustain
The drooping spirit and the roving brain ;
But this too failed : a Friend his freedom gave,
And sent him help the threatening world to brave ;
Gave solid counsel what to seek or flee,
But still would stranger to his person be :
In vain ! the truth determined to explore,
He traced the Friend whom he had wronged before.

This was too much ; both aided and advised
By one who shunned him, pitied, and despised :
He bore it not ; 'twas a deciding stroke,
And on his reason like a torrent broke :
In dreadful stillness he appeared a while,
With vacant horror and a ghastly smile ;
Then rose at once into the frantic rage,
That force controlled not, nor could love assuage.

Friends now appeared, but in the Man was seen
The angry Maniac, with vindictive mien ;
Too late their pity gave to care and skill
The hurried mind and ever-wandering will :
Unnoticed passed all time, and not a ray
Of reason broke on his benighted way ;
But now he spurned the straw in pure disdain,
And now laughed loudly at the clinking chain.

Then, as its wrath subsided by degrees,
The mind sank slowly to infantine ease,
To playful folly, and to causeless joy,
Speech without aim, and without end, employ ;
He drew fantastic figures on the wall,
And gave some wild relation of them all ;
With brutal shape he joined the human face,
And idiot smiles approved the motley race.

Harmless at length the unhappy man was found,
The spirit settled, but the reason drowned :
And all the dreadful tempest died away
To the dull stillness of the misty day.

And now his freedom he attained—if free
The lost to reason, truth and hope, can be ;
His friends, or wearied with the charge, or sure
The harmless wretch was now beyond a cure,
Gave him to wander where he pleased, and find
His own resources for the eager mind :
The playful children of the place he meets,
Playful with them he rambles through the streets ;

In all they need, his stronger arm he lends,
And his lost mind to these approving friends.

That gentle Maid, whom once the Youth had loved,
Is now with mild religious pity moved;
Kindly she chides his boyish flights, while he
Will for a moment fixed and pensive be;
And as she trembling speaks, his lively eyes
Explore her looks, he listens to her sighs;
Charmed by her voice, the harmonious sounds invade
His clouded mind, and for a time persuade:
Like a pleased infant, who has newly caught
From the maternal glance a gleam of thought,
He stands enrapt, the half-known voice to hear,
And starts, half-conscious, at the falling tear.

Rarely from town, nor then unwatched, he goes,
In darker mood, as if to hide his woes;
Returning soon, he with impatience seeks
His youthful friends, and shouts, and sings, and speaks;
Speaks a wild speech with action all as wild—
The children's leader, and himself a child;
He spins their top, or, at their bidding, bends
His back, while o'er it leap his laughing friends;
Simple and weak, he acts the boy once more,
And heedless children call him *Silly Shore*.

## THE WAGER

(*From "Tales"*)

COUNTER and CLUBB were men in trade, whose pains,
Credit, and prudence, brought them constant gains;
Partners and punctual, every friend agreed
Counter and Clubb were men who must succeed.
When they had fixed some little time in life,
Each thought of taking to himself a wife:
As men in trade alike, as men in love,
They seemed with no according views to move;
As certain ores in outward view the same,
They showed their difference when the magnet came.
Counter was vain: with spirit strong and high,
'Twas not in him like suppliant swain to sigh:
"His wife might o'er his men and maids preside,
And in her province be a judge and guide;
But what he thought, or did, or wished to do,
She must not know, or censure if she knew;
At home, abroad, by day, by night, if he
On aught determined, so it was to be:
How is a man," he asked, "for business fit,
Who to a female can his will submit?
Absent a while, let no inquiring eye
Or plainer speech presume to question why:
But all be silent; and, when seen again,
Let all be cheerful—shall a wife complain?

Friends I invite, and who shall dare to object,
Or look on them with coolness or neglect?
No! I must ever of my house be head,
And, thus obeyed, I condescend to wed."

Clubb heard the speech—"My friend is nice," said he;
"A wife with less respect will do for me:
How is he certain such a prize to gain?
What he approves, a lass may learn to feign,
And so affect to obey till she begins to reign;
Awhile complying, she may vary then,
And be as wives of more unwary men;
Beside, to him who plays such lordly part,
How shall a tender creature yield her heart;
Should he the promised confidence refuse,
She may another more confiding choose;
May show her anger, yet her purpose hide,
And wake his jealousy, and wound his pride.
In one so humbled, who can trace the friend?
I on an equal, not a slave, depend;
If true, my confidence is wisely placed,
And being false, she only is disgraced."

Clubb, with these notions, cast his eye around
And one so easy soon a partner found.
The lady chosen was of good repute;
Meekness she had not, and was seldom mute;
Though quick to anger, still she loved to smile,
And would be calm if men would wait a while:
She knew her duty, and she loved her way,
More pleased in truth to govern than obey;
She heard her priest with reverence, and her spouse
As one who felt the pressure of her vows;

Useful and civil, all her friends confessed—
Give her her way, and she would choose the best ;
Though some indeed a sly remark would make—
Give it her not, and she would choose to take.

All this, when Clubb some cheerful months had spent,
He saw, confessed, and said he was content.

Counter meantime selected, doubted, weighed,
And then brought home a young complying maid ;
A tender creature, full of fears as charms,
A beauteous nursling from its mother's arms ;
A soft, sweet blossom, such as men must love,
But to preserve must keep it in the stove :
She had a mild, subdued, expiring look—
Raise but the voice, and this fair creature shook ;
Leave her alone, she felt a thousand fears—
Chide, and she melted into floods of tears ;
Fondly she pleaded, and would gently sigh,
For very pity, or she knew not why ;
One whom to govern none could be afraid—
Hold up the finger, this meek thing obeyed ;
Her happy husband had the easiest task—
Say but his will, no question would she ask ;
She sought no reasons, no affairs she knew,
Of business spoke not, and had nought to do.

Oft he exclaimed, "How meek ! how mild ! how kind !
With her 'twere cruel but to seem unkind :
Though ever silent when I take my leave,
It pains my heart to think how hers will grieve ;

'Tis heaven on earth with such a wife to dwell,
I am in raptures to have sped so well;
But let me not, my friend, your envy raise,
No! on my life, your patience has my praise."

His Friend, though silent, felt the scorn implied—
"What need of patience?" to himself he cried:
"Better a woman o'er her house to rule,
Than a poor child just hurried from her school;
Who has no care, yet never lives at ease;
Unfit to rule, and indisposed to please.
What if he govern, there his boast should end;
No husband's power can make a slave his friend."

It was the custom of these Friends to meet
With a few neighbours in a neighbouring street;
Where Counter ofttimes would occasion seize
To move his silent Friend by words like these:
"A man," said he, "if governed by his wife,
Gives up his rank and dignity in life;
Now, better fate befalls my Friend and me."—
He spoke, and looked the approving smile to see.

The quiet partner, when he chose to speak,
Desired his friend "another theme to seek;
When thus they met, he judged that state-affairs
And such important subjects should be theirs:"
But still the partner, in his lighter vein,
Would cause in Clubb affliction or disdain;
It made him anxious to detect the cause
Of all that boasting:—"Wants my friend applause?

This plainly proves him not at perfect ease,
For, felt he pleasure, he would wish to please.
These triumphs here for some regrets atone—
Men who are blessed let other men alone."
Thus made suspicious, he observed and saw
His friend each night at early hour withdraw ;
He sometimes mentioned Juliet's tender nerves,
And what attention such a wife deserves :
"In this," thought Clubb, "full sure some mystery lies—
He laughs at me, yet he with much complies,
And all his vaunts of bliss are proud apologies."

With such ideas treasured in his breast,
He grew composed, and let his anger rest ;
Till Counter once (when wine so long went round,
That friendship and discretion both were drowned)
Began, in teasing and triumphant mood,
His evening banter :—"Of all earthly good,
The best," he said, "was an obedient spouse,
Such as my friend's—that every one allows :
What if she wishes his designs to know ?
It is because she would her praise bestow ;
What if she wills that he remain at home ?
She knows that mischief may from travel come.
I, who am free to venture where I please,
Have no such kind preventing checks as these ;
But mine is double duty, first to guide
Myself aright, then rule a house beside ;
While this our friend, more happy than the free,
Resigns all power, and laughs at liberty."

"By Heaven!" said Clubb, "excuse me
if I swear,
I'll bet a hundred guineas, if he dare,
That uncontrolled I will such freedoms take
That he will fear to equal—there's my stake."

"A match!" said Counter, much by wine
inflamed;
"But we are friends—let smaller stake be named:
Wine for our future meeting, that will I
Take and no more—what peril shall we try?"
"Let's to Newmarket," Clubb replied; "or choose
Yourself the place, and what you like to lose;
And he who first returns, or fears to go,
Forfeits his cash."—Said Counter, "Be it so."

The friends around them saw with much delight
The social war, and hailed the pleasant night;
Nor would they further hear the cause discussed,
Afraid the recreant heart of Clubb to trust.

Now sober thoughts returned as each withdrew,
And of the subject took a serious view;
"'Twas wrong," thought Counter, "and will
grieve my love;"
"'Twas wrong," thought Clubb, "my wife will
not approve:
But friends were present; I must try the thing,
Or with my folly half the town will ring."

He sought his lady—"Madam, I'm to blame,
But was reproached, and could not bear the
shame;

Here in my folly—for 'tis best to say
The very truth—I've sworn to have my way;
To that Newmarket—(though I hate the place,
And have no taste or talents for a race,
Yet so it is—well, now prepare to chide)—
I laid a wager that I dared to ride;
And I must go: by Heaven, if you resist
I shall be scorned, and ridiculed, and hissed;
Let me with grace before my friends appear,
You know the truth, and must not be severe:
He too must go, but that he will of course:
Do you consent?—I never think of force."

"You never need," the worthy Dame replied;
"The husband's honour is the woman's pride:
If I in trifles be the wilful wife,
Still for your credit I would lose my life.
Go! and when fixed the day of your return,
Stay longer yet, and let the blockheads learn
That though a wife may sometimes wish to rule,
She would not make the indulgent man a fool;
I would at times advise—but idle they
Who think the assenting husband *must* obey."

The happy man, who thought his lady right
In other cases, was assured to-night;
Then for the day with proud delight prepared,
To show his doubting friends how much he dared.

Counter—who grieving sought his bed, his rest
Broken by pictures of his love distressed—
With soft and winning speech the fair prepared:
"She all his councils, comforts, pleasures shared:

She was assured he loved her from his soul,
She never knew and need not fear control ;
But so it happened—he was grieved at heart,
It happened so, that they awhile must part—
A little time—the distance was but short,
And business called him—he despised the sport ;
But to Newmarket he engaged to ride
With his friend Clubb : " and there he stopped
and sighed.

Awhile the tender creature looked dismayed,
Then floods of tears the call of grief obeyed :—

" She an objection ! No ! " she sobbed, " not
one ;
Her work was finished, and her race was run ;
For die she must, indeed she would not live
A week alone, for all the world could give ;
He too must die in that same wicked place ;
It always happened—was a common case ;
Among those horrid horses, jockeys, crowds,
'Twas certain death—they might bespeak their
shrouds ;
He would attempt a race, be sure to fall—
And she expire with terror—that was all :
With love like hers she was indeed unfit
To bear such horrors, but she must submit."

" But for three days, my love ! three days
at most."
" Enough for me ; I then shall be a ghost."
" My honour's pledged ! "—" Oh ! yes, my
dearest life,
I know your honour must outweigh your wife ;

But ere this absence have you sought a friend?
I shall be dead—on whom can you depend?
Let me one favour of your kindness crave,
Grant me the stone I mentioned for my grave."

"Nay, love, attend—why, bless my soul—I say
I will return—there—weep no longer—nay!"
"Well! I obey, and to the last am true,
But spirits fail me; I must die; adieu!"

"What, Madam! must?—'tis wrong—I'm angry—zounds!
Can I remain and lose a thousand pounds?"

"Go then, my love! it is a monstrous sum,
Worth twenty wives—go, love! and I am dumb;
Nor be displeased—had I the power to live,
You might be angry, now you must forgive:
Alas! I faint—ah! cruel—there's no need
Of wounds or fevers—this has done the deed."

The lady fainted, and the husband sent
For every aid, for every comfort went;
Strong terror seized him: "Oh! she loved so well,
And who the effect of tenderness could tell?"

She now recovered, and again began
With accent querulous—"Ah! cruel man!"
Till the sad husband, conscience-struck, confessed,
'Twas very wicked with his friend to jest;

For now he saw that those who were obeyed,
Could like the most subservient feel afraid:
And though a wife might not dispute the will
Of her liege lord, she could prevent it still.

The morning came, and Clubb prepared to ride
With a smart boy, his servant, and his guide;
When, ere he mounted on his ready steed,
Arrived a letter, and he stopped to read.

"My friend," he read, "our journey I decline,
A heart too tender for such strife is mine;
Yours is the triumph, be you so inclined;
But you are too considerate and kind:
In tender pity to my Juliet's fears
I thus relent, o'ercome by love and tears;
She knows your kindness; I have heard her say,
A man like you 'tis pleasure to obey:
Each faithful wife, like ours, must disapprove
Such dangerous trifling with connubial love;
What has the idle world, my friend, to do
With our affairs? they envy me and you:
What if I could my gentle spouse command—
Is that a cause I should her tears withstand?
And what if you, a friend of peace, submit
To one you love—is that a theme for wit?
'Twas wrong, and I shall henceforth judge it weak
Both of submission and control to speak;
Be it agreed that all contention cease,
And no such follies vex our future peace;
Let each keep guard against domestic strife,
And find nor slave nor tyrant in his wife."

"Agreed," said Clubb, "with all my soul agreed;"—
And to the boy, delighted, gave his steed.
"I think my friend has well his mind expressed,
And I assent; such things are not a jest."
"True," said the Wife, "no longer he can hide
The truth that pains him by his wounded pride:
Your friend has found it not an easy thing,
Beneath his yoke this yielding soul to bring:
These weeping willows, though they seem inclined
By every breeze, yet not the strongest wind
Can from their bent divert this weak but stubborn kind;
Drooping they seek your pity to excite,
But 'tis at once their nature and delight;
Such women feel not; while they sigh and weep,
'Tis but their habit—their affections sleep;
They are like ice that in the hand we hold,
So very melting, yet so very cold;
On such affection let not man rely,
The husbands suffer, and the ladies sigh:
But your friend's offer let us kindly take,
And spare his pride for his vexation's sake;
For he has found, and through his life will find,
'Tis easiest dealing with the firmest mind—
More just when it resists, and, when it yields, more kind."

## RICHARD'S YOUTH[1]

*(From "Tales of the Hall")*

"LEFT by that father, who was known to few,
And to that mother, who has not her due
Of honest fame," said Richard, "our retreat
Was a small cottage, for our station meet,
On Barford Downs: that mother, fond and poor,
There taught some truths, and bade me seek for more,
Such as our village-school and books a few
Supplied; but such I cared not to pursue;
I sought the town, and to the ocean gave
My mind and thoughts, as restless as the wave:
Where crowds assembled I was sure to run,
Heard what was said, and mused on what was done;

[1] This, in effect, is Crabbe's autobiography of his early days. The extract here presented was an especial favourite of Cardinal Newman's.

For the benefit of readers unacquainted with "Tales of the Hall," the plan upon which these poems are put together may be mentioned here. Richard and George are two brothers, separated at an early age for many years. George, having gained a fortune in business, has bought a country-seat—"The Hall." The neighbouring rector is an old college-friend of his. Richard, after wandering abroad and serving in the Peninsular War, has returned to England, and has come on a visit to the Hall. The two brothers and the rector recount their experiences in a series of tales.

Attentive listening in the moving scene,
And often wondering what the men could mean.
When ships at sea made signals of their need,
I watched on shore the sailors and their speed:
Mixed in their act, nor rested till I knew
Why they were called and what they were to do.

"Whatever business in the port was done,
I, without call, was with the busy one;
Not daring question, but with open ear
And greedy spirit ever bent to hear.

"To me the wives of seamen loved to tell
What storms endangered men esteemed so well;
What wondrous things in foreign parts they saw,
Lands without bounds, and people without law.
No ships were wrecked upon that fatal beach,
But I could give the luckless tale of each;
Eager I looked till I beheld a face
Of one disposed to paint their dismal case;
Who gave the sad survivors' doleful tale,
From the first brushing of the mighty gale
Until they struck; and, suffering in their fate,
I longed the more they should its horrors state;
While some, the fond of pity, would enjoy
The earnest sorrows of the feeling boy.

"I sought the men returned from regions cold,
The frozen straits, where icy mountains rolled;
Some I could win to tell me serious tales
Of boats uplifted by enormous whales,
Or, when harpooned, how swiftly through the sea
The wounded monsters with the cordage flee;

Yet some uneasy thoughts assailed me then,
The monsters warred not with nor wounded men:
The smaller fry we take, with scales and fins,
Who gasp and die—this adds not to our sins;
But so much blood! warm life, and frames so large
To strike, to murder!—seemed a heavy charge.

"They told of days where many goes to one
Such day as ours; and how a larger sun,
Red, but not flaming, rolled, with motion slow,
On the world's edge, but never dropped below.
There were fond girls who took me to their side
To tell the story how their lovers died;
They praised my tender heart, and bade me prove
Both kind and constant when I came to love.
In fact, I lived for many an idle year
In fond pursuit of agitations dear;
For ever seeking, ever pleased to find,
The food I loved, I thought not of its kind;
It gave affliction while it brought delight,
And joy and anguish could at once excite.

"One gusty day, now stormy and now still,
I stood apart upon the western hill,
And saw a race at sea: a gun was heard,
And two contending boats in sail appeared:
Equal awhile; then one was left behind,
And for a moment had her chance resigned,
When, in that moment, up a sail they drew—
Not used before—their rivals to pursue.

Strong was the gale! in hurry now there came
Men from the town—their thoughts, their fears
the same;
And women too! affrighted maids and wives,
All deeply feeling for their sailors' lives.
The strife continued; in a glass we saw
The desperate efforts, and we stood in awe,
When the last boat shot suddenly before,
Then filled and sank—and could be seen no
more!

"Then were those piercing shrieks, that frantic
flight,
All hurried! all in tumult and affright!
A gathering crowd from different streets drew
near,
All ask, all answer—none attend, none hear!

"One boat is safe; and see! she backs her sail
To save the sinking.—Will her care avail?

"O! how impatient on the sands we tread,
And the winds roaring, and the women led,
As up and down they pace with frantic air,
And scorn a comforter, and will despair;
They know not who in either boat is gone,
But think the father, husband, lover, one.

"And who is she apart? She dares not come
To join the crowd, yet cannot rest at home:
With what strong interest looks she at the waves,
Meeting and clashing o'er the seamen's graves!
'Tis a poor girl betrothed—a few hours more,
And *he* will lie a corpse upon the shore.

Strange, that a boy could love these scenes, and cry
In very pity—but that boy was I.
With pain my mother would my tales receive,
And say, 'My Richard, do not learn to grieve.'
One wretched hour had passed before we knew
Whom they had saved! Alas! they were but two,
An orphaned lad and widowed man—no more!
And they unnoticed stood upon the shore,
With scarce a friend to greet them—widows viewed
This man and boy, and then their cries renewed:
'Twas long before the signs of woe gave place
To joy again; grief sat on every face.

"Sure of my mother's kindness, and the joy
She felt in meeting her rebellious boy,
I at my pleasure our new seat forsook,
And, undirected, these excursions took:
I often rambled to the noisy quay,[1]
Strange sounds to hear, and business strange to me;
Seamen and carmen, and I know not who,
A lewd, amphibious, rude, contentious crew—
Confused as bees appear about their hive,
Yet all alert to keep their work alive.

"Here, unobserved as weed upon the wave,
My whole attention to the scene I gave;
I saw their tasks, their toil, their care, their skill,
Led by their own and by a master-will;

[1] *I.e.*, he rambled from Aldeborough to Slaughden Quay.

And though contending, toiling, tugging on,
The purposed business of the day was done.

"The open shops of craftsmen caught my eye,
And there my questions met the kind reply:
Men, when alone, will teach; but, in a crowd,
The child is silent, or the man is proud;
But, by themselves, there is attention paid
To a mild boy, so forward, yet afraid.

"I made me interest at the inn's fire-side,
Amid the scenes to bolder boys denied;
For I had patrons there, and I was one,
They judged, who noticed nothing that was done.
'A quiet lad!' would my protector say;
'To him, now, this is better than his play;
Boys are as men; some active, shrewd, and keen,
They look about if aught is to be seen;
And some, like Richard here, have not a mind
That takes a notice—but the lad is kind.'

"I loved in summer on the heath to walk,
And seek the shepherd—shepherds love to talk:
His superstition was of ranker kind,
And he with tales of wonder stored my mind—
Wonders that he in many a lonely eve
Had seen, himself, and therefore must believe.
His boy, his Joe, he said, from duty ran,
Took to the sea and grew a fearless man:
'On yonder knoll—the sheep were in the fold—
His spirit passed me, shivering-like and cold!

I felt a fluttering, but I knew not how,
And heard him utter, like a whisper, "Now!"
Soon came a letter from a friend—to tell
That he had fallen, and the time he fell.'

"Even to the smugglers' hut the rocks between,
I have, adventurous in my wandering, been:
Poor, pious Martha served the lawless tribe,
And could their merits and their faults describe;
Adding her thoughts; 'I talk, my child, to you,
Who little think of what such wretches do.'

"I loved to walk where none had walked before,
About the rocks that ran along the shore;
Or far beyond the sight of men to stray,
And take my pleasure when I lost my way;
For then 'twas mine to trace the hilly heath,
And all the mossy moor that lies beneath:
Here had I favourite stations, where I stood
And heard the murmurs of the ocean-flood,
With not a sound beside except when flew
Aloft the lapwing or the grey curlew,
Who with wild notes my fancied power defied,
And mocked the dreams of solitary pride.

"I loved to stop at every creek and bay
Made by the river in its winding way,
And call to memory—not by marks they bare,
But by the thoughts that were created there.

"Pleasant it was to view the sea-gulls strive
Against the storm, or in the ocean dive,

With eager scream, or when they dropping gave
Their closing wings, to sail upon the wave;
Then as the winds and waters raged around,
And breaking billows mixed their deafening
sound,
They on the rolling deep securely hung,
And calmly rode the restless waves among.
Nor pleased it less around me to behold,
Far up the beach, the yeasty sea-foam rolled;
Or, from the shore upborne, to see on high
Its frothy flakes in wild confusion fly:
While the salt spray that clashing billows form
Gave to the taste a feeling of the storm."

## RUTH

(*From "Tales of the Hall"*)

RICHARD would wait till George the tale should
ask,
Nor waited long.—He then resumed the task.

"South in the port, and eastward in the street,
Rose a small dwelling, my beloved retreat,
Where lived a pair, then old; the sons had fled
The home they filled: a part of them were
dead;
Married a part; while some at sea remained,
And stillness in the seaman's mansion reigned;
Lord of some petty craft, by night and day
The man had fished each fathom of the bay.

"My friend the matron wooed me, quickly won,
To fill the station of an absent son
(Him whom at school I knew, and Peter known,
I took his home and mother for my own):
I read, and doubly was I paid to hear
Events that fell upon no listless ear:
She grieved to say her parents could neglect
Her education!—'twas a sore defect;
She, who had ever such a vast delight
To learn, and now could neither read nor write:
But hear she could, and from our stores I took,
Librarian meet! at her desire, our book.

"Full twenty volumes—I would not exceed
The modest truth—were there for me to read;
These a long shelf contained, and they were found
Books truly speaking, volumes fairly bound:
The rest—for some of other kinds remained,
And these a board beneath the shelf contained—
Had their deficiencies in part; they lacked
One side or both, or were no longer backed;
But now became degraded from their place,
And were but pamphlets of a bulkier race.
Yet had we pamphlets, an inviting store,
From sixpence downwards—nay, a part were more;
Learning abundance, and the various kinds
For relaxation—food for different minds;
A piece of Wingate—thanks for all we have—
What we of figures needed, fully gave;

Culpepper, new in numbers, cost but thrice
The ancient volume's unassuming price,
But told what planet o'er each herb had power,
And how to take it in the lucky hour.

"History we had—wars, treasons, treaties, crimes,
From Julius Cæsar to the present times;
Questions and answers, teaching what to ask
And what reply,—a kind, laborious task:
A scholar's book it was, who, giving, swore
It held the whole he wished to know, and more.
And we had poets, hymns and songs divine;
The most we read not, but allowed them fine.

"Our tracts were many, on the boldest themes—
We had our metaphysics, spirits, dreams,
Visions and warnings, and portentous sights,
Seen, though but dimly, in the doleful nights,
When the good wife her wintry vigil keeps,
And thinks alone of him at sea, and weeps.

"Add to all these our works in single sheets,
That our Cassandras sing about the streets:
These, as I read, the grave good man would say,
'Nay, Hannah!' and she answered, 'What is Nay?
What is there, pray, so hurtful in a song?
It is our fancy only makes it wrong;
His purer mind no evil thoughts alarm,
And innocence protects him like a charm.'
Then would the matron, when the song had passed,
And her laugh over, ask a hymn at last;

To the coarse jest she would attention lend,
And to the pious psalm in reverence bend:
She gave her every power and all her mind,
As chance directed, or as taste inclined.

"More of our learning I will now omit;
We had our Cyclopædias of Wit,
And all our works—rare fate!—were to our genius fit.

"When I had read, and we were weary grown
Of other minds, the dame disclosed her own:
And long have I in pleasing terror stayed
To hear of boys trepanned, and girls betrayed;
Ashamed so long to stay, and yet to go afraid.
I could perceive, though Hannah bore full well
The ills of life, that few with her would dwell,
But pass away, like shadows o'er the plain
From flying clouds, and leave it fair again;
Still every evil, be it great or small,
Would one past sorrow to the mind recall,
The grand disease of life, to which she turns,
And common cares and lighter suffering spurns.
'O! these are nothing,—they will never heed
Such idle contests, who have fought indeed,
And have the wounds unclosed.'—I understood
My hint to speak, and my design pursued,
Curious the secret of that heart to find,
To mirth, to song, to laughter loud inclined,
And yet to bear and feel a weight of grief behind:
How does she thus her little sunshine throw
Always before her?—I should like to know.

My friend perceived, and would no longer hide
The bosom's sorrow.—Could she not confide
In one who wept, unhurt—in one who felt, untried?

"'Dear child, I show you sins and sufferings strange,
But you, like Adam, must for knowledge change
That blissful ignorance: remember, then,
What now you feel should be a check on men;
For then your passions no debate allow,
And therefore lay up resolution now.
'Tis not enough, that, when you can persuade
A maid to love, you know there's promise made;
'Tis not enough that you design to keep
That promise made, nor leave your lass to weep:
But you must guard yourself against the sin,
And think it such to draw the party in:
Nay, the more weak and easy to be won,
The viler you who have the mischief done.

"'I am not angry, love; but men should know
They cannot always pay the debt they owe
Their plighted honour; they may cause the ill
They cannot lessen, though they feel a will;
For *he* had truth with love, but love in youth
Does wrong, that cannot be repaired by truth.

"'*Ruth*—I may tell, too oft had she been told—
Was tall and fair, and comely to behold,
Gentle and simple, in her native place
Not one compared with her in form or face;

She was not merry, but she gave our hearth
A cheerful spirit that was more than mirth.

"'There was a sailor boy, and people said
He was, as man, a likeness of the maid;
But not in this—for he was ever glad,
While Ruth was apprehensive, mild, and sad;
A quiet spirit hers, and peace would seek
In meditation: tender, mild, and meek!
Her loved the lad most truly; and, in truth,
She took an early liking to the youth:
To her alone were his attentions paid,
And they became the bachelor and maid.
He wished to marry, but so prudent we
And worldly wise, we said it could not be:
They took the counsel,—may be, they approved,—
But still they grieved and waited, hoped and loved.

"'Now, my young friend, when of such state I speak
As one of danger, you will be to seek;
You know not, Richard, where the danger lies
In loving hearts, kind words, and speaking eyes;
For lovers speak their wishes with their looks
As plainly, love, as you can read your books.
Then, too, the meetings and the partings, all
The playful quarrels in which lovers fall,
Serve to one end—each lover is a child,
Quick to resent and to be reconciled;
And then their peace brings kindness that remains,
And so the lover from the quarrel gains:

When he has fault that she reproves, his fear
And grief assure her she was too severe,
And that brings kindness; when he bears an ill,
Or disappointment, and is calm and still,
She feels his own obedient to her will,
And that brings kindness—and what kindness brings
I cannot tell you :—these were trying things.
They were as children, and they fell at length;
The trial, doubtless, is beyond their strength
Whom grace supports not; and will grace support
The too confiding, who their danger court?
Then they would marry, but were now too late;
All could their fault in sport or malice state;
And though the day was fixed and now drew on,
I could perceive my daughter's peace was gone;
She could not bear the bold and laughing eye
That gazed on her,—reproach she could not fly;
Her grief she would not show, her shame could not deny :
For some with many virtues come to shame,
And some that lose them all preserve their name.

"'Fixed was the day; but ere that day appeared,
A frightful rumour through the place was heard;
War, who had slept a while, awaked once more,
And gangs came pressing till they swept the shore :
Our youth was seized and quickly sent away,
Nor would the wretches for his marriage stay,
But bore him off, in barbarous triumph bore,
And left us all our miseries to deplore :

There were wives, maids, and mothers on the beach,
And some sad story appertained to each ;
Most sad to Ruth—to neither could she go !
But sat apart, and suffered matchless woe !
On the vile ship they turned their earnest view,
Not one last look allowed,—not one adieu !
They saw the men on deck, but none distinctly knew.
And there she stayed, regardless of each eye,
With but one hope—a fervent hope to die :
Nor cared she now for kindness—all beheld
Her, who invited none, and none repelled ;
For there are griefs, my child, that sufferers hide,
And there are griefs that men display with pride ;
But there are other griefs that, so we feel,
We care not to display them nor conceal :
Such were our sorrows on that fatal day,
More than our lives the spoilers tore away ;
Nor did we heed their insult—some distress
No form or manner can make more or less,
And this is of that kind—this misery of a Press !
They say such things must be—perhaps they must ;
But, sure, they need not fright us and disgust ;
They need not soulless crews of ruffians send
At once the ties of humble love to rend :
A single day had Thomas stayed on shore,
He might have wedded, and we asked no more ;
And that stern man, who forced the lad away,
Might have attended, and have graced the day ;
His pride and honour might have been at rest,
It is no stain to make a couple blessed !
Blessed !—no, alas ! it was to ease the heart

Of one sore pang, and then to weep and part!
But this he would not.—English seamen fight
For England's gain and glory—it is right:
But will that public spirit be so strong,
Filled, as it must be, with their private wrong?
Forbid it, honour! one in all the fleet
Should hide in war, or from the foe retreat;
But is it just, that he who so defends
His country's cause should hide him from her friends?
Sure, if they must upon our children seize,
They might prevent such injuries as these;
Might hours—nay, days—in many a case allow,
And soften all the griefs we suffer now.
Some laws, some orders, might in part redress
The licensed insults of a British Press,
That keeps the honest and the brave in awe,
Where might is right, and violence is law.
Be not alarmed, my child; there's none regard
What you and I conceive so cruel-hard:
There is compassion, I believe; but still
One wants the power to help, and one the will,
And so from war to war the wrongs remain,
While Reason pleads, and Misery sighs in vain.

"'Thus my poor Ruth was wretched and undone,
Nor had a husband for her only son,
Nor had he father; hope she did a while,
And would not weep, although she could not smile;
Till news was brought us that the youth was slain,
And then, I think, she never smiled again;
Or, if she did, it was but to express

A feeling far, indeed, from happiness!
Something that her bewildered mind conceived:
When she informed us that she never grieved,
But was right merry, then her head was wild,
And grief had gained possession of my child:
Yet, though bewildered for a time, and prone
To ramble much and speak aloud, alone,
Yet did she all that duty ever asked,
And more, her will self-governed and untasked;
With meekness bearing all reproach, all joy
To her was lost; she wept upon her boy,
Wished for his death, in fear that he might live
New sorrow to a burdened heart to give.

"'There was a Teacher, where my husband went—
*Sent*, as he told the people—what he meant
You cannot understand, but—he was sent:
This man from meeting came, and strove to win
Her mind to peace by drawing off the sin,
Or what it was, that, working in her breast,
Robbed it of comfort, confidence, and rest:
He came and reasoned, and she seemed to feel
The pains he took—her griefs began to heal;
She ever answered kindly when he spoke,
And always thanked him for the pains he took;
So, after three long years, and all the while
Wrapped up in grief, she blessed us with a smile,
And spoke in comfort; but she mixed no more
With younger persons, as she did before.

"'Still Ruth was pretty; in her person neat;
So thought the Teacher, when they chanced to meet:

He was a weaver by his worldly trade,
But powerful work in the assemblies made;
People came leagues to town to hear him sift
The holy text,—he had the grace and gift;
Widows and maidens flocked to hear his voice;
Of either kind he might have had his choice;—
But he had chosen—we had seen how shy
The girl was getting, my good man and I,—
That when the weaver came, she kept with us,
Where he his points and doctrines might discuss;
But in our bit of garden, or the room
We call our parlour, there he must not come:
She loved him not, and though she could attend
To his discourses, as her guide and friend,
Yet now to these she gave a listless ear,
As if a friend she would no longer hear;
This might he take for woman's art, and cried,
"Spouse of my heart, I must not be denied!"—
Fearless he spoke, and I had hope to see
My girl a wife—but this was not to be.

"'My husband, thinking of his worldly store,
And not, frail man, enduring to be poor,
Seeing his friend would for his child provide
And hers, he grieved to have the man denied:
For Ruth, when pressed, rejected him and grew
To her old sorrow, as if that were new.
"Who shall support her?" said her father, "how
Can I, infirm and weak as I am now?"
But peace again is fled: the Teacher comes,
And new importance, haughtier air assumes.

"'No hapless victim of a tyrant's love
More keenly felt, or more resisting strove

Against her fate : she looked on every side,
But there were none to help her, none to guide ;—
And he, the man who should have taught the soul,
Wished but the body in his base control.

She left her infant on the Sunday morn,
A creature doomed to shame ! in sorrow born ;
A thing that languished, nor arrived at age
When the man's thoughts with sin and pain engage—
She came not home to share our humble meal,
Her father thinking what his child would feel
From his hard sentence—still she came not home.
The night grew dark, and yet she was not come ;
The east-wind roared, the sea returned the sound,
And the rain fell as if the world were drowned :
There were no lights without, and my good man,
To kindness frightened, with a groan began
To talk of Ruth, and pray : and then he took
The Bible down, and read the holy book ;
For he had learning : and when that was done
We sat in silence—Whither could we run ?
We said ; and then rushed frightened from the door,
For we could bear our own conceit no more :
We called on neighbours—there she had not been ;
We met some wanderers—ours they had not seen ;

We hurried o'er the beach, both north and south,
Then joined, and wandered to our haven's mouth :
Where rushed the falling waters wildly out,
I scarcely heard the good man's fearful shout,
Who saw a something on the billow ride,
And—"Heaven have mercy on our sins!" he cried,
"It is my child!"—and to the present hour
So he believes—and spirits have the power.

"'And she was gone! the waters wide and deep
Rolled o'er her body as she lay asleep.
She heard no more the angry waves and wind,
She heard no more the threatening of mankind ;
Wrapped in dark weeds, the refuse of the storm,
To the hard rock was borne her comely form !

"'But, oh! what storm was in that mind! what strife!
That could compel her to lay down her life!
For she was seen within the sea to wade,
By one at distance, when she first had prayed ;
Then to a rock within the hither shoal
Softly and with a fearful step she stole ;
Then, when she gained it, on the top she stood
A moment still—and dropped into the flood!
The man cried loudly, but he cried in vain,—
She heard not then—she never heard again!
She had—pray, Heaven!—she had that world in sight,
Where frailty mercy finds, and wrong has right ;
But, sure, in this her portion such has been,
Well had it still remained a world unseen!'

"Thus far the dame: the passions will dispense
To such a wild and rapid eloquence—
Will to the weakest mind their strength impart,
And give the tongue the language of the heart."

## LADY BARBARA; OR, THE GHOST [1]

*(From "Tales of the Hall")*

The Brothers spoke of Ghosts,—a favourite theme
With those who love to reason or to dream;
And they, as greater men were wont to do,
Felt strong desire to think the stories true:
Stories of spirits freed, who came to prove
To spirits bound in flesh that yet they love,
To give them notice of the things below,
Which we must wonder how they came to know,
Or, known, would think of coming to relate
To creatures who are tried by unknown fate.

"Warning," said Richard, "seems the only thing
That would a spirit on an errand bring:
To turn a guilty mind from wrong to right
A ghost might come, at least I think it might."

[1] "Out of many beautiful tales, the most uniformly elevated and animated."—Cardinal Newman, in a letter to his father (1820).

"But," said the Brother, "if we here are tried,
A spirit sent would put that law aside:
It gives to some advantage others need,
Or hurts the sinner should it not succeed:
If from the dead, said Dives, one were sent
To warn my brethren, sure they would repent;
But Abraham answered, If they now reject
The guides they have, no more would that effect;
Their doubts too obstinate for grace would prove,
For wonder hardens hearts it fails to move.

"Suppose a sinner in an hour of gloom,
And let a ghost with all its horrors come;
From lips unmoved let solemn accents flow,
Solemn his gesture be, his motion slow;
Let the waved hand and threatening look impart
Truth to the mind and terror to the heart;
And, when the form is fading to the view,
Let the convicted man cry, 'This is true!'

"Alas! how soon would doubts again invade
The willing mind, and sins again persuade!
I saw it—What?—I was awake, but how?
Not as I am, or I should see it now:
It spoke, I think,—I thought, at least it spoke,—
And looked alarming—yes, I felt the look.
But then in sleep those horrid forms arise,
That the soul sees,—and, we suppose, the eyes,—
And the soul hears,—the senses then thrown by,
She is herself the ear, herself the eye;

A mistress so will free her servile race
For their own tasks, and take herself the place :
In sleep what forms will ductile fancy take,
And what so common as to dream awake ?
On others thus do ghostly guests intrude ?
Or why am I by such advice pursued ?
One out of millions who exist, and why
They know not—cannot know—and such am I ;
And shall two beings of two worlds, to meet,
The laws of one, perhaps of both, defeat ?
It cannot be.—But if some being lives
Who such kind warning to a favourite gives,
Let him these doubts from my dull spirit clear,
And once again, expected guest ! appear.

" And if a second time the power complied,
Why is a third, and why a fourth, denied ?
Why not a warning ghost for ever at our side ?
Ah, foolish being ! thou hast truth enough,—
Augmented guilt would rise on greater proof ;
Blind and imperious passion disbelieves,
Or madly scorns the warning it receives,
Or looks for pardon ere the ill be done,
Because 'tis vain to strive our fate to shun ;
In spite of ghosts, predestined woes would
come,
And warning add new terrors to our doom.

" Yet there are tales that would remove our
doubt,
The whispered tales that circulate about,
That in some noble mansion take their rise,
And, told with secrecy and awe, surprise :

It seems not likely people should advance,
For falsehood's sake, such train of circumstance;
Then the ghosts bear them with a ghost-like grace,
That suits the person, character, and place.

"But let us something of the kind recite:
What think you, now, of Lady Barbara's sprite?"

"I know not what to think; but I have heard
A ghost, to warn her or advise, appeared;
And that she sought a friend before she died,
To whom she might the awful fact confide,
Who sealed and secret should the story keep
Till Lady Barbara slept her final sleep,
In that close bed that never spirit shakes,
Nor ghostly visitor the sleeper wakes."

"Yes, I can give that story, not so well
As your old woman would the legend tell,
But as the facts are stated; and now hear
How ghosts advise, and widows persevere."

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When her lord died, who had so kind a heart,
That any woman would have grieved to part,
It had such influence on his widow's mind,
That she the pleasures of the world resigned,

Young as she was, and from the busy town
Came to the quiet of a village down;
Not as insensible to joys, but still
With a subdued but half-rebellious will;
For she had passions warm, and feeling strong,
With a right mind, that dreaded to be wrong;—
Yet she had wealth to tie her to the place
Where it procures delight and veils disgrace;
Yet she had beauty to engage the eye,
A widow still in her minority;
Yet she had merit worthy men to gain,
And yet her hand no merit could obtain;
For, though secluded, there were trials made,
When he who softened most could not persuade;
A while she hearkened as her swain proposed,
And then his suit with strong refusal closed.

"Thanks, and farewell!—give credit to my word,
That I shall die the widow of my lord;
'Tis my own will, I now prefer the state,—
If mine should change, it is the will of fate."

Such things were spoken, and the hearers cried,
"'Tis very strange,—perhaps she may be tried."

The lady passed her time in taking air,
In working, reading, charities, and prayer;
In the last duties she received the aid
Of an old friend, a priest, with whom she prayed;
And to his mansion with a purpose went,
That there should life be innocently spent;

Yet no cold votary of the cloister she,
Warm her devotion, warm her charity;
The face the index of a feeling mind,
And her whole conduct rational and kind.

Though rich and noble, she was pleased to slide
Into the habits of her reverend guide,
And so attended to his girls and boys,
She seemed a mother in her fears and joys;
On her they looked with fondness, something checked
By her appearance, that engaged respect;
For still she dressed as one of higher race,
And her sweet smiles had dignity and grace.

George was her favourite, and it gave her joy
To indulge and to instruct the darling boy;
To watch, to soothe, to check the forward child,
Who was at once affectionate and wild;
Happy and grateful for her tender care,
And pleased her thoughts and company to share.

George was a boy with spirit strong and high,
With handsome face, and penetrating eye;
O'er his broad forehead hung his locks of brown,
That gave a spirit to his boyish frown.
"My little man," were words that she applied
To him, and he received with growing pride;
Her darling even from his infant years
Had something touching in his smiles and tears;

And in his boyish manners he began
To show the pride that was not made for man;
But it became the child, the mother cried,
And the kind lady said it was not pride.

George, to his cost, though sometimes to his praise,
Was quite a hero in these early days,
And would return from heroes just as stout,
Blood in his crimson cheek, and blood without.
"What! he submit to vulgar boys and low—
He bear an insult, he forget a blow!
They called him Parson—let his father bear
His own reproach, it was his proper care:
He was no parson, but he still would teach
The boys their manners, and yet would not preach."

The father, thoughtful of the time foregone,
Was loth to damp the spirit of his son;
Remembering he himself had early laurels won;
The mother, frightened, begged him to refrain,
And not his credit or his linen stain;
While the kind friend so gently blamed the deed,
He smiled in tears, and wished her to proceed;
For the boy pleased her, and that roguish eye
And daring look were cause of many a sigh,
When she had thought how much would such quick temper try:
And oft she felt a kind of gathering gloom,
Sad, and prophetic of the ills to come.

Years fled unmarked: the lady taught no more
The adopted tribe as she was wont before;

But by her help the school the lasses sought,
And by the Vicar's self the boy was taught;
Not unresisting when that cursed Greek
Asked so much time for words that none will speak.

"What can men worse for mortal brain contrive
Than thus a hard dead language to revive!
Heavens, if a language once be fairly dead,
Let it be buried, not preserved and read,
The bane of every boy to decent station bred;
If any good these crabbed books contain,
Translate them well, and let them then remain;
To one huge vault convey the useless store,
Then lose the key, and never find it more."

Something like this the lively boy expressed,
When Homer was his torment and his jest.

"George," said the father, "can at pleasure seize
The point he wishes, and with too much ease;
And hence, depending on his powers, and vain,
He wastes the time that he will sigh to gain."
The partial widow thought the wasted days
He would recover, urged by love and praise;
And thus absolved, the boy, with grateful mind,
Repaid a love so useful and so blind:
Her angry words he loved, although he feared,
And words not angry doubly-kind appeared.

George, then on manhood verging, felt the charms

Of war, and kindled at the world's alarms;
Yet war was then, though spreading wide and far,
A state of peace to what has since been war;
'Twas then some dubious claim at sea or land,
That placed a weapon in a warrior's hand;
But in these times the causes of our strife
Are hearth and altar, liberty and life.

George, when from college he returned, and heard
His father's questions, cool and shy appeared.
"Who had the honours?"—"Honour!" said the youth,
"Honour at college!—very good, in truth!"
"What hours to study did he give?"—He gave
Enough to feel they made him like a slave.
In fact, the Vicar found, if George should rise,
'Twas not by college rules and exercise.

"At least the time for your degree abide,
And be ordained," the man of peace replied;
"Then you may come and aid me while I keep,
And watch, and shear the hereditary sheep;
Choose then your spouse."—That heard the youth, and sighed,
Nor to aught else attended or replied.

George had of late indulged unusual fears
And dangerous hopes: he wept unconscious tears;—
Whether for camp or college, well he knew
He must at present bid his friends adieu;
His father, mother, sisters, could he part
With these, and feel no sorrow at his heart?

But from that lovely lady could he go?
That fonder, fairer, dearer mother?—No!
For while his father spoke, he fixed his eyes
On that dear face, and felt a warmth arise,
A trembling flush of joy, that he could ill disguise—
Then asked himself from whence this growing bliss,
This new-found joy, and all that waits on this?
"Why sinks that voice so sweetly in mine ear?
What makes it now a livelier joy to hear?
Why gives that touch?—still, still do I retain
The fierce delight that tingled through each vein:
Why at her presence with such quickness flows
The vital current?—Well a lover knows.

"Oh! tell me not of years,—can she be old?
Those eyes, those lips, can man unmoved behold?
Has time that bosom chilled? are cheeks so rosy cold?
No, she is young, or I her love to engage
Will grow discreet, and that will seem like age:
But speak it not; Death's equalising arm
Levels not surer than Love's stronger charm,
That bids all inequalities be gone,
That laughs at rank, that mocks comparison.

"There is not young or old, if Love decrees;
He levels orders, he confounds degrees:
There is not fair, or dark, or short, or tall,
Or grave, or sprightly—Love reduces all;
He makes unite the pensive and the gay,
Gives something here, takes something there away;

From each abundant good a portion takes,
And for each want a compensation makes;
Then tell me not of years—Love, power divine,
Takes, as he wills, from hers, and gives to mine."

And she, in truth, was lovely—Time had strown
No snows on her, though he so long had flown;
The purest damask blossomed in her cheek,
The eyes said all that eyes are wont to speak:
Her pleasing person she with care adorned,
Nor arts that stay the flying graces scorned;
Nor held it wrong these graces to renew,
Or give the fading rose its opening hue;
Yet few there were who needed less the art
To hide an error, or a grace impart.

George, yet a child, her faultless form admired,
And called his fondness love, as truth required;
But now, when conscious of the secret flame,
His bosom's pain, he dared not give the name;
In her the mother's milder passion grew,
Tender she was, but she was placid too;
From him the mild and filial love was gone,
And a strong passion came in triumph on.

"Will she," he cried, "this impious love allow?
And, once my mother, be my mistress now?
The parent-spouse? how far the thought from her!
And how can I the daring wish aver?

When first I speak it, how will those dear eyes
Gleam with awakened horror and surprise;
Will she not, angry and indignant, fly
From my imploring call, and bid me die?
Will she not shudder at the thought, and say,
My son! and lift her eyes to heaven, and pray?

"Alas! I fear—and yet my soul she won
While she with fond endearments called me son!
Then first I felt—yet knew that I was wrong—
This hope, at once so guilty and so strong:
She gave—I feel it now—a mother's kiss,
And quickly fancy took a bolder bliss;
But hid the burning blush, for fear that eye
Should see the transport, and the bliss deny:
O! when she knows the purpose I conceal,
When my fond wishes to her bosom steal,
How will that angel fear? how will the woman feel?

"And yet, perhaps, this instant, while I speak,
She knows the pain I feel, the cure I seek;
Better than I she may my feelings know,
And nurse the passion that she dares not show;
She reads the look,—and sure my eyes have shown
To her the power and triumph of her own;
And in maternal love she veils the flame
That she will heal with joy, yet hear with shame.

"Come, let me then—no more a son—reveal
The daring hope, and for her favour kneel;

Let me in ardent speech my meanings dress,
And, while I mourn the fault, my love confess;
And, once confessed, no more that hope resign,
For she or misery henceforth must be mine.
O! what confusion shall I see advance
On that dear face, responsive to my glance!
Sure she can love!"
In fact, the youth was right;
She could, but love was dreadful in her sight;
Love like a spectre in her view appeared,
The nearer he approached the more she feared.

But knew she, then, this dreaded love? She guessed
That he had guilt—she knew he had not rest;
She saw a fear that she could ill define,
And nameless terrors in his looks combine;
It is a state that cannot long endure,
And yet both parties dreaded to be sure.

All views were past of priesthood and a gown,
George, fixed on glory, now prepared for town;
But first this mighty hazard must be run,
And more than glory either lost or won:
Yet, what was glory? Could he win that heart
And gain that hand, what cause was there to part?
Her love afforded all that life affords—
Honour and fame were phantasies and words.

But he must see her—She alone was seen
In the still evening of a day serene:
In the deep shade beyond the garden walk
They met, and, talking, ceased and feared to talk;

At length she spoke of parent's love,—and now
He hazards all. "No parent, lady, thou!
None, none to me! but looks so fond and mild
Would well become the parent of my child."

She gasped for breath — then sat as one resolved
On some high act, and then the means revolved.

"It cannot be, my George, my child, my son!
The thought is misery!—Guilt and misery shun:
Far from us both be such design, oh, far!
Let it not pain us at the awful bar,
Where souls are tried, where known the mother's part
That I sustain, and all of either heart.
To wed with thee I must all shame efface,
And part with female dignity and grace:
Was I not told, by one who knew so well
This rebel heart, that it must not rebel?
Were I not warned, yet Reason's voice would cry,
'Retreat, resolve, and from the danger fly!'
If Reason spoke not, yet would woman's pride—
A woman will by better counsel guide;
And should both Pride and Prudence plead in vain,
There is a warning that must still remain,
And, though the heart rebelled, would ever cry
'Refrain!'"

He heard, he grieved: so checked, the eager youth
Dared not again repeat the offensive truth,

But stopped, and fixed on that loved face an eye
Of pleading passion, trembling to reply:
And that reply was hurried, was expressed
With bursts of sorrow from a troubled breast;
He could not yet forbear the tender suit,
And dare not speak—his eloquence was mute.

But this not long,—again the passion rose
In him, in her the spirit to oppose:
Yet was she firm; and he, who feared the calm
Of resolution, purposed to alarm,
And make her dread a passion strong and wild—
He feared her firmness while her looks were mild:
Therefore he strongly, warmly urged his prayer,
Till she, less patient, urged him to forbear.

"I tell thee, George, as I have told before,
I feel a mother's love, and feel no more;
A child I bore thee in my arms, and how
Could I—did prudence yield—receive thee now?"

At her remonstrance hope revived, for oft
He found her words severe, her accents soft;
In eyes that threatened tears of pity stood,
And truth she made as gracious as she could;—
But, when she found the dangerous youth would seek
His peace alone, and still his wishes speak,
Fearful she grew, that, opening thus his heart,
He might to hers a dangerous warmth impart;
All her objections slight to him appeared,—
But one she had, and now it must be heard.

"Yes, it must be! and he shall understand
What powers, that are not of the world, command;
So shall he cease, and I in peace shall live—"
Sighing she spoke — "that widowhood can give!"
Then to her lover turned, and gravely said,
"Let due attention to my words be paid:
Meet me to-morrow, and resolve to obey;"
Then named the hour and place, and went her way.
Before that hour, or moved by spirit vain
Of woman's wish to triumph and complain,
She had his parents summoned, and had shown
Their son's strong wishes, nor concealed her own:
"And do you give," she said, "a parent's aid
To make the youth of his strange love afraid;
And, be it sin or not, be all the shame displayed."

The good old Pastor wondered, seemed to grieve,
And looked suspicious on this child of Eve:
He judged his boy, though wild, had never dared
To talk of love, had not rebuke been spared;
But he replied, in mild and tender tone,
"It is not sin, and therefore shame has none."

The different ages of the pair he knew,
And quite as well their different fortunes too:
A meek, just man; but difference in his sight
That made the match unequal made it right:

"His son, his friend, united and become
Of his own hearth—the comforts of his home—
Was it so wrong? Perhaps it was her pride
That felt the distance, and the youth denied?"

The blushing widow heard, and she retired,
Musing on what her ancient friend desired;
She could not, therefore, to the youth complain,
That his good father wished him to refrain;
She could not add, "Your parents, George, obey,
They will your absence"—no such will had they.

Now, in the appointed minute met the pair,
Foredoomed to meet: George made the lover's prayer,—
That was heard kindly; then the lady tried
For a calm spirit, felt it, and replied.

"George, that I love thee why should I suppress?
For 'tis a love that virtue may profess—
Parental,—frown not,—tender, fixed, sincere;
Thou art for dearer ties by much too dear,
And nearer must not be, thou art so very near:
Nay, does not reason, prudence, pride, agree,
Our very feelings, that it must not be?
Nay, look not so,—I shun the task no more,
But will to thee thy better self restore.

"Then hear, and hope not; to the tale I tell
Attend! obey me, and let all be well:
Love is forbid to me, and thou wilt find
All thy too ardent views must be resigned;

Then from thy bosom all such thoughts remove,
And spare the curse of interdicted love.
If doubts at first assail thee, wait a while,
Nor mock my sadness with satiric smile:
For, if not much of other worlds we know,
Nor how a spirit speaks in this below,
Still there is speech and intercourse; and now
The truth of what I tell I first avow,—
True will I be in all, and be attentive thou.

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"I was a Ratcliffe, taught and trained to live
In all the pride that ancestry can give;
My only brother, when our mother died,
Filled the dear offices of friend and guide;
My father early taught us all he dared,
And for his bolder flights our minds prepared:
He read the works of deists, every book
From crabbed Hobbes to courtly Bolingbroke;
And when we understood not, he would cry,
'Let the expressions in your memory lie,
The light will soon break in, and you will find
Rest for your spirits, and be strong of mind!'

"Alas! however strong, however weak,
The rest was something we had still to seek!
He taught us duties of no arduous kind,
The easy morals of the doubtful mind;
He bade us all our childish fears control,
And drive the nurse and grandam from the soul;
Told us the word of God was all we saw,
And that the law of nature was his law;
This law of nature we might find abstruse,
But gain sufficient for our common use.

Thus by persuasion we our duties learned,
And were but little in the cause concerned.

"We lived in peace, in intellectual ease,
And thought that virtue was the way to please,
And pure morality and keeping free
From all the stains of vulgar villany.
But Richard, dear enthusiast! shunned reproach,
He let no stain upon his name encroach;
But fled the hated vice, was kind and just,
That all must love him, and that all might trust.

"Free, sad discourse was ours; we often sighed,
To think we could not in some truths confide.
Our father's final words gave no content,
We found not what his self-reliance meant.
To fix our faith some grave relations sought;
Doctrines and creeds of various kinds they brought,
And we as children heard what they as doctors taught.

"Some to the priest referred us, in whose book
No unbeliever could resisting look;
Others to some great preacher's, who could tame
The fiercest mind, and set the cold on flame;
For him no rival in dispute was found
Whom he could not confute or not confound.

"Some mystics told us of the sign and seal,
And what the Spirit would in time reveal,

If we had grace to wait, if we had hearts to
feel:
Others, to Reason trusting, said, 'Believe
As she directs, and what she proves receive;'
While many told us, 'It is all but guess;
Stick to your church, and calmly acquiesce.'

"Thus doubting, wearied, hurried, and perplexed,
This world was lost in thinking of the next:
When spoke my brother—'From my soul I hate
This clash of thought, this ever-doubting state;
For ever seeking certainty, yet blind
In our research, and puzzled when we find.
Could not some spirit, in its kindness, steal
Back to our world, and some dear truth reveal?
Say there is danger,—if it could be done,
Sure one would venture—I would be the one;
And when a spirit—much as spirits might—
I would to thee communicate my light!'

"I sought my daring brother to oppose,
But awful gladness in my bosom rose:
I feared my wishes; but through all my frame
A bold and elevating terror came:
Yet with dissembling prudence I replied,
'Know we the laws that may be thus defied?
Should the free spirit to the embodied tell
The precious secret, would it not rebel?'
Yet while I spoke I felt a pleasing glow
Suffuse my cheek at what I longed to know;
And I, like Eve transgressing, grew more
bold,
And wished to hear a spirit and behold.

" 'I have no friend,' said he; 'to not one man
Can I appear: but, love! to thee I can:
Who first shall die'——I wept,—but 'I agree
To all thou say'st, dear Richard! and would be
The first to wing my way, and bring my news to
thee.'

" Long we conversed, but not till we perceived
A gathering gloom—Our freedom gained, we
grieved;
Above the vulgar, as we judged, in mind,
Below in peace, more sad as more refined;
'Twas joy, 'twas sin—Offenders at the time,
We felt the hurried pleasure of our crime,
With pain that crime creates, and this in both—
Our mind united as the strongest oath.

" O, my dear George! in ceasing to obey,
Misery and trouble meet us in our way!
I felt as one intruding in a scene
Where none should be, where none had ever
been;
Like our first parent, I was new to sin,
But plainly felt its sufferings begin:
In nightly dreams I walked on soil unsound,
And in my day-dreams endless error found.

" With this dear brother I was doomed to
part,
Who, with a husband, shared a troubled heart:
My lord I honoured; but I never proved
The maddening joy, the boast of some who
loved:

It was a marriage that our friends professed
Would be most happy, and I acquiesced;
And we were happy, for our love was calm,
Not life's delicious essence, but its balm.
My brother left us—dear unhappy boy!
He never seemed to taste of earthly joy,
Never to live on earth, but ever strove
To gain some tidings of a world above.

"Parted from him, I found no more to please;
Ease was my object, and I dwelt in ease;
And thus in quiet, not perhaps content,
A year in wedlock—lingering time!—was spent.

"One night I slept not, but I courted sleep,
And forced my thoughts on tracks they could
not keep;
Till nature, wearied in the strife, reposed.
And deep forgetfulness my wanderings closed.

"My lord was absent—distant from the bed
A pendant lamp its softened lustre shed;
But there was light that chased away the gloom,
And brought to view each object in the room:
These I observed ere yet I sank in sleep,
That, if disturbed not, had been long and deep.

"I was awakened by some being nigh,
It seemed some voice,—and gave a timid cry;
When sounds, that I describe not, slowly broke
On my attention——'Be composed, and look!'
I strove, and I succeeded; looked with awe,
But yet with firmness, and my brother saw.

"George, why that smile?—By all that God has done,
By that great Spirit, by the blessed Son,
By the one holy Three, by the thrice holy One,
I saw my brother,—saw him by my bed,—
And every doubt in full conviction fled!
It was his own mild spirit—He a while
Waited my calmness with benignant smile.
So softly shines the veiled sun, till past
The cloud, and light upon the world is cast:
That looked composed and softened I surveyed,
And met the glance fraternal less afraid:
Though in those looks was something of command,
And traits of what I feared to understand.

"Then spoke the spirit—George, I pray, attend—
'First, let all doubts of thy religion end:
The word revealed is true: inquire no more;
Believe in meekness, and with thanks adore:
Thy priest attend, but not in all rely,
And to objectors seek for no reply;
Truth, doubt, and error will be mixed below—
Be thou content the greater truths to know,
And in obedience rest thee——For thy life
Thou needest counsel—now a happy wife,
A widow soon! and then, my sister, then,
Think not of marriage, think no more of men:—
Life will have comforts; thou wilt much enjoy
Of moderate good; then do not this destroy
Fear much, and wed no more; by passion led,
Shouldst thou again'—art thou attending?—
'wed,

Care in thy ways will growl, and anguish haunt
thy bed :
A brother's warning on thy heart engrave :
Thou art a mistress—then be not a slave !
Shouldst thou again that hand in fondness give,
What life of misery art thou doomed to live !
How wilt thou weep, lament, implore, complain !
How wilt thou meet derision and disdain !
And pray to Heaven in doubt, and kneel to man
in vain !
Thou readest of woes to tender bosoms sent—
Thine shall with tenfold agony be rent ;
Increase of anguish shall new years bestow,
Pain shall on thought and grief on reason grow,
And this the advice I give increase the ill I
show.'

"'A second marriage !—No !—by all that's
dear ! '
I cried aloud—The spirit bade me hear.
'There will be a trial,—how I must not say,
Perhaps I cannot—listen, and obey !
Free is thy will—the event I cannot see,
Distinctly cannot, but thy will is free.
Come, weep not, sister—spirits can but guess,
And not ordain—but do not wed distress ;
For who would rashly venture on a snare ? '

"' I swear ! ' I answered.—' No, thou must not
swear,'
He said, or I had sworn ; but still the vow
Was past, was in my mind, and there is now :
Never ! O, never :—Why that sullen air ?
Thinkest thou—ungenerous !—I would wed
despair ?

"Was it not told me thus?—and then I cried,
'Art thou in bliss?'—but nothing he replied,
Save of my fate, for that he came to show,
Nor of aught else permitted me to know.
'Forewarned, forearm thee, and thy way pursue,
Safe, if thou wilt, not flowery—now, adieu!'

"'Nay, go not thus,' I cried, 'for this will seem
The work of sleep, a mere impressive dream;
Give me some token, that I may indeed
From the suggestions of my doubts be freed!'

"'Be this a token—ere the week be fled
Shall tidings greet thee from the newly dead.'

"'Nay, but,' I said, with courage not my own,
'O! be some signal of thy presence shown;
Let not this visit with the rising day
Pass, and be melted like a dream away.'

"'O, woman! woman! ever anxious still
To gain the knowledge, not to curb the will!
Have I not promised?—Child of sin, attend—
Make not a lying spirit of thy friend:
Give me thy hand!'——I gave it, for my soul
Was now grown ardent, and above control;
Eager I stretched it forth, and felt the hold
Of shadowy fingers, more than icy cold:
A nameless pressure on my wrist was made,
And instant vanished the beloved shade!
Strange it will seem, but, ere the morning came,
I slept, nor felt disorder in my frame:
Then came a dream—I saw my father's shade,
But not with awe like that my brother's made;

And he began—'What! made a convert, child?
Have they my favourite by their creed beguiled?
Thy brother's weakness I could well foresee,
But had, my girl, more confidence in thee:
Art thou, indeed, before their ark to bow?
I smiled before, but I am angry now:
Thee will they bind by threats, and thou wilt shake
At tales of terror that the miscreants make:
Between the bigot and enthusiast led,
Thou hast a world of miseries to dread.
Think for thyself, nor let the knaves or fools
Rob thee of reason, and prescribe thee rules.'

"Soon as I woke, and could my thoughts collect,
What can I think, I cried, or what reject?
Was it my brother? Aid me, power divine!
Have I not seen him, left he not a sign?
Did I not then the placid features trace
That now remain—the air, the eye, the face?
And then my father—but how different seem
These visitations—this, indeed, a dream!

"Then for that token on my wrist—'tis here,
And very slight to you it must appear;
Here, I'll withdraw the bracelet—'tis a speck!
No more! but 'tis upon my life a check."

"O! lovely all, and like its sister arm!
Call this a check, dear lady? 'tis a charm—
A slight, an accidental mark—no more."
"Slight as it is, it was not there before:

Then was there weakness, and I bound it——
Nay!
This is infringement—take those lips away!

"On the fourth day came letters, and I cried,
Richard is dead, and named the day he died:
A proof of knowledge, true! but one, alas! of pride.
The signs to me were brought, and not my lord,
But I, impatient, waited not the word;
And much he marvelled, reading of the night
In which the immortal spirit took its flight.

"Yes! I beheld my brother at my bed
The hour he died! the instant he was dead—
His presence now I see! now trace him as he fled.

"Ah! fly me, George, in very pity, fly;
Thee I reject, but yield thee reasons why;
Our fate forbids,—the counsel Heaven has sent
We must adopt, or grievously repent;
And I adopt."——George humbly bowed, and sighed,
But, lost in thought, he looked not nor replied;
Yet feebly uttered in his sad adieu,
"I must not doubt thy truth, but perish if thou'rt true."
But when he thought alone, his terror gone
Of the strange story, better views came on.

"Nay, my enfeebled heart, be not dismayed!
A boy again, am I of ghosts afraid?

Does she believe it? Say she does believe;
Is she not born of error and of Eve?
Oh! there is lively hope I may the cause
retrieve.

"'If you re-wed'——exclaimed the Ghost.
For what
Puts he the case, if marry she will not?
He knows her fate—but what am I about?
Do I believe?—'tis certain I have doubt,
And so has she,—what therefore will she do?
She the predicted fortune will pursue,
And by the event will judge if her strange
dream was true;
The strong temptation to her thought applied
Will gain new strength, and will not be denied;
The very threat against the thing we love
Will the vexed spirit to resistance move;
With vows to virtue weakness will begin,
And fears of sinning let in thoughts of sin."

Strong in her sense of weakness, now with-
drew
The cautious lady from the lover's view;
But she perceived the looks of all were
changed,—
Her kind old friends grew peevish and
estranged:
A fretful spirit reigned, and discontent
From room to room in sullen silence went;
And the kind widow was distressed at heart
To think that she no comfort could impart:
"But he will go," she said, "and he will strive
In fields of glorious energy to drive

Love from his bosom.—Yes, I then may stay,
And all will thank me on a future day."

So judged the lady, nor appeared to grieve,
Till the young soldier came to take his leave;
But not of all assembled—No! he found
His gentle sisters all in sorrow drowned;
With many a shaken hand, and many a kiss,
He cried, "Farewell! a solemn business this;
Nay, Susan, Sophy!—heaven and earth, my dears!
I am a soldier—what do I with tears?"

He sought his parents;—they together walked,
And of their son, his views and dangers, talked;
They knew not how to blame their friend, but still
They murmured, "She may save us if she will:
Were not these visions working in her mind
Strange things—'tis in her nature to be kind."

Their son appeared.—He soothed them, and was blessed,
But still the fondness of his soul confessed.
And where the lady?—To her room retired!
"Now show, dear son, the courage she required."

George bowed in silence, trying for assent
To his hard fate, and to his trial went:
Fond, but yet fixed, he found her in her room;
Firm, and yet fearful, she beheld him come:
Nor sought he favour now—No! he would meet his doom.

"Farewell! and, madam, I beseech you pray
That this sad spirit soon may pass away;
That sword or ball would to the dust restore
This body, that the soul may grieve no more
For love rejected.—Oh! that I could quit
The life I loathe, who am for nothing fit,
No, not to die!"—"Unhappy, wilt thou make
The house all wretched for thy passion's sake?
And most its grieving object?"—
"Grieving?—No!
Or as a conqueror mourns a dying foe,
That makes his triumph sure.—Couldst thou deplore
The evil done, the pain would be no more;
But an accursed dream has steeled thy breast,
And all the woman in thy soul suppressed."

"Oh! it was vision, George; a vision true
As ever seer or holy prophet knew."

"Can spirits, lady, though they might alarm,
Make an impression on that lovely arm?
A little cold the cause, a little heat,
Or vein minute, or artery's morbid beat,
Even beauty these admit."—
"I did behold
My brother's form."—
"Yes, so thy Fancy told,
When in the morning she her work surveyed,
And called the doubtful memory to her aid."

"Nay, think! the night he died—the very night!"—
"'Tis very true, and so perchance he might,

But in thy mind—not, lady, in thy sight!
Thou wert not well; forms delicately made
These dreams and fancies easily invade;
The mind and body feel the slow disease,
And dreams are what the troubled fancy sees."
"Oh, but how strange that all should be combined!"—
"True; but such combinations we may find;
A dream's predicted number gained a prize,
Yet dreams make no impression on the wise,
Though some chance good, some lucky gain may rise."

"Oh! but those words, that voice so truly known!"—
"No doubt, dear lady, they were all thine own;
Memory for thee thy brother's form portrayed;
It was thy fear the awful warning made:
Thy former doubts of a religious kind
Account for all these wanderings of the mind."

"But then, how different when my father came!
These could not in their nature be the same!"—

"Yes, all are dreams; but some as we awake
Fly off at once, and no impression make:
Others are felt, and ere they quit the brain
Make such impression that they come again;
As half familiar thoughts, and half unknown,
And scarcely recollected as our own;
For half a day abide some vulgar dreams,
And give our grandams and our nurses themes;

Others, more strong, abiding figures draw
Upon the brain, and we assert, 'I saw;'
And then the fancy on the organs place
A powerful likeness of a form and face.

"Yet more—in some strong passion's troubled reign,
Or when the fevered blood inflames the brain,
At once the outward and the inward eye
The real object and the fancied spy;
The eye is open, and the sense is true,
And therefore they the outward object view;
But while the real sense is fixed on these,
The power within its own creation sees:
And these, when mingled in the mind, create
Those striking visions which our dreamers state:
For, knowing that is true that met the sight,
They think the judgment of the fancy right.

"Your frequent talk of dreams has made me turn
My mind on them, and these the facts I learn.
Or should you say, 'tis not in us to take
Heed in both ways, to sleep and be awake,
Perhaps the things by eye and mind surveyed
Are in their quick alternate efforts made;
For by this mixture of the truth, the dream
Will in the morning fresh and vivid seem.

"Dreams are like portraits, and we find they please
Because they are confessed resemblances;
But those strange nightmare visions we compare
To waxen figures—they too real are,

Too much a very truth, and are so just
To life and death, they pain us or disgust.

"Hence from your mind these idle visions
shake,
And, O! my love, to happiness awake!"

"It *was* a warning, tempter! from the dead:
And wedding thee I should to misery wed!"

"False and injurious! what! unjust to thee?
O! hear the vows of Love—it cannot be:
What! I forbear to bless thee—I forego
That first great blessing of existence? No!
Did every ghost that terror saw arise
With such prediction, I should say it lies:
But none there are—a mighty gulf between
Hides the ideal world from objects seen;
We know not where unbodied spirits dwell,
But this we know, they are invisible;—
Yet I have one that fain would dwell with
thee,
And always with thy purer spirit be."

"O! leave me, George!"—
"To take the field, and die,
So leave thee, Lady? Yes, I will comply;
Thou art too far above me—ghosts withstand
My hopes in vain, but riches guard thy hand,
For I am poor—affection and a heart
To thee devoted, I but these impart;
Then bid me go, I will thy words obey,
But let not visions drive thy friend away."

"Hear me, O! hear me! Shall I wed my son?"—
"I am in fondness and obedience one;
And I will reverence, honour, love, adore,
Be all that fondest sons can be—and more:
And shall thy son, if such he be, proceed
To fierce encounters, and in battle bleed?
No! thou canst weep!"
"O! leave me, I entreat;
Leave me a moment—we shall quickly meet."

"No! here I kneel, a beggar, at thy feet."—
He said, and knelt—with accents softer still,
He wooed the weakness of a failing will
And erring judgment—took her hand and cried,
"Withdraw it not!—O! let it thus abide,
Pledge of thy love—upon thy act depend
My joy, my hope,—thus they begin or end!
Withdraw it not."—He saw her looks expressed
Favour and grace—the hand was firmer pressed;
Signs of opposing fear no more were shown,
And as he pressed, he felt it was his own.

Soon through the house was known the glad assent,
The night so dreaded was in comfort spent;
War was no more, the destined knot was tied,
And the fond widow made a fearful bride.

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Let mortal frailty judge how mortals frail
Thus in their strongest resolutions fail,
And though we blame, our pity will prevail.

Yet with that Ghost—for she so thought—in view!
When she believed that all he told was true;—
When every threat was to her mind recalled,
Till it became affrightened and appalled;—
When Reason pleaded, Think! forbear! refrain!—
And when, though trifling, stood that mystic stain,
Predictions, warnings, threats, were present all in vain.

The exulting youth a mighty conqueror rose,
And who hereafter shall his will oppose?

Such is our tale: but we must yet attend
Our weak kind widow to her journey's end;
Upon her death-bed laid, confessing to a friend
Her full belief, for to the hour she died
This she professed:—
"The truth I must not hide;
It was my brother's form, and in the night he died:
In sorrow and in shame has passed my time,
All I have suffered follow from my crime:
I sinned with warning—when I gave my hand
A power within said, urgently,—Withstand!
And I resisted—O! my God, what shame,
What years of torment, from that frailty came!

"That husband-son!—I will my fault review—
What did he not that men or monsters do?

His day of love, a brief autumnal day,
E'en in its dawning hastened to decay,
Doomed from our odious union to behold
How cold he grew, and then how worse than cold;
Eager he sought me, eagerly to shun,
Kneeling he wooed me, but he scorned me, won;
The tears he caused served only to provoke
His wicked insult o'er the heart he broke;
My fond compliance served him for a jest,
And sharpened scorn—'I ought to be distressed;
Why did I not with my chaste ghost comply?'
And with upbraiding scorn he told me why.
O! there was grossness in his soul: his mind
Could not be raised, nor softened, nor refined.

"Twice he departed in his rage, and went
I know not where, nor how his days were spent;
Twice he returned a suppliant wretch, and craved,
Mean as profuse, the trifle I had saved.

"I have had wounds, and some that never heal,
What bodies suffer, and what spirits feel;
But he is gone who gave them, he is fled
To his account! and my revenge is dead:
Yet it is duty, though with shame, to give
My sex a lesson—let my story live;
For if no ghost the promised visit paid,
Still was a deep and strong impression made,
That wisdom had approved, and prudence had obeyed;

But from another world that warning came,
And, O! in this be ended all my shame!
Like the first being of my sex I fell,
Tempted, and with the tempter doomed to dwell—
He was the master-fiend, and where he reigned was hell."

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This was her last, for she described no more
The rankling feelings of a mind so sore,
But died in peace.—One moral let us draw,
Be it a ghost or not the lady saw:—

If our discretion tells us how to live,
We need no ghost a helping hand to give;
But if discretion cannot us restrain,
It then appears a ghost would come in vain.

## ELLEN

(*From "Tales of the Hall"*)

"Ride you this fair cool morning?" said the Squire:[1]
"Do—for a purchase I have made inquire;
And, with you, take a will complacently to admire:

[1] *I.e.*, George.

Southward at first, dear Richard, make your way,
Cross Hilton Bridge, move on through Breken Clay;
At Dunham Wood turn duly to the east,
And there your eyes upon the ocean feast;
Then ride above the cliff, or ride below,
You'll be enraptured, for your taste I know;
It is a prospect that a man might stay
To his bride hastening on his wedding-day;
At Tilburn Sluice once more ascend, and view
A decent house; an ample garden too,
And planted well behind—a lively scene, and new;
A little taste, a little pomp displayed
By a dull man, who had retired from trade
To enjoy his leisure—Here he came prepared
To farm, nor cost in preparation spared;
But many works he purchased, some he read,
And often rose with projects in his head
Of crops in courses raised, of herds by matching bred.
We had just found these little humours out,
Just saw—he saw not—what he was about;
Just met as neighbours, still disposed to meet,
Just learned the current tales of Dowling Street,
And were just thinking of our female friends,
Saying—'You know not what the man intends,
A rich, kind, hearty'—and it might be true
Something he wished, but had not time to do;
A cold ere yet the falling leaf—of small
Effect till then—was fatal in the fall;
And of that house was his possession brief:—
Go; and guard well against the falling leaf.

"But hear me, Richard, looking to my ease,
Try if you can find something that will please;
Faults if you see, and such as must abide,
Say they are small, or say that I can hide;
But faults that I can change, remove, or mend,
These like a foe detect—or like a friend.

"Mark well the rooms, and their proportions learn,
In each some use, some elegance discern;
Observe the garden, its productive wall,
And find a something to commend in all;
Then, should you praise them in a knowing way,
I'll take it kindly—that is well—be gay.
Nor pass the pebbled cottage as you rise
Above the sluice, till you have fixed your eyes
On the low woodbined window, and have seen,
So fortune favour you, the ghost within;
Take but one look, and then your way pursue,
It flies all strangers, and it knows not you."

Richard returned, and by his Brother stood,
Not in a pensive, not in pleasant mood;
But by strong feeling into stillness wrought,
As nothing thinking, or with too much thought;
Or like a man who means indeed to speak,
But would his hearer should his purpose seek.

When George—"What is it, Brother, you would hide?
Or what confess?"—"Who is she?" he replied;
"That angel whom I saw, to whom is she allied?

Of this fair being let me understand,
And I will praise your purchase, house and land.

"Hers was that cottage on the rising ground,
West of the waves, and just beyond their sound;
'Tis larger than the rest, and whence, indeed,
You might expect a lady to proceed;
But O! this creature, far as I could trace,
Will soon be carried to another place.
'Fair, fragile thing!' I said, when first my eye
Caught hers, 'wilt thou expand thy wings and fly?
'Or wilt thou vanish? Beauteous spirit, stay!'—
For will it not (I questioned) melt away?
No! it was mortal—I unseen was near,
And saw the bosom's sigh, the standing tear!
She thought profoundly, for I stayed to look,
And first she read, then laid aside her book;
Then on her hand reclined her lovely head,
And seemed unconscious of the tear she shed.

"'Art thou so much,' I said, 'to grief a prey?'
Till pity pained me, and I rode away.

"Tell me, my Brother, is that sorrow dread
For the great change that bears her to the dead?
Has she connections? Does she love?—I feel
Pity and grief,—wilt thou her woes reveal?"

"They are not lasting, Richard, they are woes
Chastised and meek! she sings them to repose;

If not, she reasons; if they still remain,
She finds resource, that none shall find in vain.

"Whether disease first grew upon regret,
Or nature gave it, is uncertain yet,
And must remain; the frame was slightly made,
That grief assailed, and all is now decayed!

"But though so willing from the world to part,
I must not call her case a broken heart;
Nor dare I take upon me to maintain
That hearts once broken never heal again."

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She was an only daughter, one whose sire
Loved not that girls to knowledge should aspire;
But he had sons, and Ellen quickly caught
Whatever they were by their masters taught;
This when the father saw—"It is the turn
Of her strange mind," said he; "but let her learn;
'Tis almost pity with that shape and face—
But is a fashion, and brings no disgrace;
Women of old wrote verse, or for the stage
Brought forth their works! they now are reasoners sage,
And with severe pursuits dare grapple and engage:
If such her mind, I shall in vain oppose;
If not, her labours of themselves will close."

Ellen, 'twas found, had skill without pretence,
And silenced envy by her meek good sense;

That Ellen learnt, her various knowledge proved ;
Soft words and tender looks, that Ellen loved ;
For he who taught her brothers found in her
A constant, ready, eager auditor ;
This he perceived, nor could his joy disguise,
It tuned his voice, it sparkled in his eyes.

Not very young nor very handsome he,
But very fit an Abelard to be ;
His manner and his meekness hushed alarm
In all but Ellen—Ellen felt the charm ;
Hers was fond "filial love," she found delight
To have her mind's dear father in her sight ;
But soon the borrowed notion she resigned—
He was no father, even to the mind.

But Ellen had her comforts—"He will speak,"
She said, "for he beholds me fond and weak :
Fond, and he therefore may securely plead,—
Weak, I have therefore of his firmness need ;
With whom my father will his Ellen trust,
Because he knows him to he kind and just."

Alas ! too well the conscious lover knew
The parent's mind, and well the daughter's too ;
He felt of duty the imperious call,
Beheld his danger, and must fly or fall.
What would the parent, what his pupils think ?
Oh ! he was standing on perdition's brink :
In his dilemma flight alone remained,
And could he fly whose very soul was chained ?
He knew she loved ; she tried not to conceal
A hope she thought that virtue's self might feel.

Ever of her and her frank heart afraid,
Doubting himself, he sought in absence aid,
And had resolved on flight, but still the act
delayed;
At last so high his apprehension rose,
That he would both his love and labour close.

"While undisclosed my fear each instant
grows,
And I lament the guilt that no one knows;
Success undoes me, and the view that cheers
All other men, all dark to me appears!"

Thus as he thought, his Ellen at his side
Her soothing softness to his grief applied;
With like effect as water cast on flame,
For he more heated and confused became,
And broke in sorrow from the wondering maid,
Who was at once offended and afraid;
Yet "Do not go!" she cried, and was awhile
obeyed.

"Art thou then ill, dear friend?" she asked,
and took
His passive hand—"How very pale thy look!
And thou art cold, and tremblest—pray thee tell
Thy friend, thy Ellen, is her master well?
And let her with her loving care attend
To all that vexes and disturbs her friend."

"Nay, my dear lady! we have all our cares,
And I am troubled with my poor affairs:
Thou canst not aid me, Ellen; could it be
And might it, doubtless I would fly to thee;

But we have sundry duties, and must all,
Hard as it may be, go where duties call.
Suppose the trial were this instant thine,
Could'st thou the happiest of thy views resign
At duty's strong command ? "—" If thou wert by,"
Said the unconscious maiden, " I would try ! "—
And as she sighed she heard the soft responsive sigh.

And then assuming steadiness, " Adieu ! "
He cried, and from the grieving Ellen flew ;
And to her father with a bleeding heart
He went, his grief and purpose to impart ;
Told of his health, and did in part confess
That he should love the noble maiden less.

The parent's pride to sudden rage gave way—
" And the girl loves ! that plainly you would say ;
And you with honour, in your pride, retire !—
Sir, I your prudence envy and admire."

But here the father saw the rising frown,
And quickly let his lofty spirit down.

" Forgive a parent !—I may well excuse
A girl who could perceive such worth and choose
To make it hers : we must not look to meet
All we might wish ;—is age itself discreet ?
Where conquest may not be, 'tis prudence to retreat."

Then, with the kindness worldly minds assume,
He praised the self-pronounced and rigorous doom ;

He wondered not that one so young should love,
And much he wished he could the choice approve;
Much he lamented such a mind to lose,
And begged to learn if he could aid his views,
If such were formed—then closed the short account,
And to a shilling paid the full amount.

So Cecil left the mansion, and so flew
To foreign shores, without an interview:
He must not say, I love—he could not say, Adieu!

Long was he absent; as a guide to youth,
With grief contending, and in search of truth,
In courting peace, and trying to forget
What was so deeply interesting yet.

A friend in England gave him all the news,
A sad indulgence that he would not lose:
He told how Ellen suffered, how they sent
The maid from home in sullen discontent,
With some relation on the Lakes to live,
In all the sorrow such retirements give;
And there she roved among the rocks, and took
Moss from the stone, and pebbles from the brook;
Gazed on the flies that settled on the flowers,
And so consumed her melancholy hours.

Again he wrote.—The father then was dead,
And Ellen to her native village fled,
With native feeling—there she oped her door,
Her heart, her purse, and comforted the poor,

The sick, the sad,—and there she passed her days,
Deserving much, but never seeking praise,
Her task to guide herself, her joy the fallen to raise.
Nor would she nicely faults and merits weigh,
But loved the impulse of her soul to obey:
The prayers of all she heard, their sufferings viewed,
Nor turned from any save when love pursued;
For though to love disposed, to kindness prone,
She thought of Cecil, and she lived alone.

Thus heard the lover of the life she passed
Till his return,—and he returned at last;
For he had saved, and was a richer man
Than when to teach and study he began;
Something his father left, and he could fly
To the loved country where he wished to die.

"And now," he said, "this maid with gentle mind
May I not hope to meet, as good, as kind,
As in the days when first her friend she knew
And then could trust—and he indeed is true?
She knew my motives, and she must approve
The man who dared to sacrifice his love
And fondest hopes to virtue: virtuous she,
Nor can resent that sacrifice in me."

He reasoned thus, but feared, and sought the friend
In his own country, where his doubts must end:
They then together to her dwelling came,
And by a servant sent her lover's name,

A modest youth, whom she before had known,
His favourite then, and doubtless *then* her own.

They in the carriage heard the servants speak
At Ellen's door—"A maid so heavenly meek,
Who would all pain extinguish! Yet will she
Pronounce my doom, I feel the certainty!"
"Courage!" the friend exclaimed; "the lover's fear
Grows without ground:" but Cecil would not hear;
He seemed some dreadful object to explore,
And fixed his fearful eye upon the door,
Intensely longing for reply—the thing
That must to him his future fortune bring;
And now it brought! like Death's cold hand it came—
"The lady was a stranger to the name!"
Backward the lover in the carriage fell,
Weak, but not fainting—"All," said he, "is well!
Return with me—I have no more to seek!"
And this was all the woeful man would speak.

Quickly he settled all his worldly views,
And sailed from home, his fiercer pains to lose
And nurse the milder—now with labour less
He might his solitary world possess,
And taste the bitter-sweet of love in idleness.

Greece was the land he chose; a mind decayed
And ruined there through glorious ruin strayed,

There read, and walked, and mused,—there loved, and wept, and prayed.
Nor would he write, nor suffer hope to live,
But gave to study all his mind could give;
Till, with the dead conversing, he began
To lose the habits of a living man,
Save that he saw some wretched, them he tried
To soothe,—some doubtful, them he strove to guide;
Nor did he lose the mind's ennobling joy
Of that new state that death must not destroy;
What time had done we know not,—Death was nigh,
To his first hopes the lover gave a sigh,
But hopes more new and strong confirmed his wish to die.

Meantime poor Ellen in her cottage thought
"That he would seek her—sure she should be sought:
She did not mean—it was an evil hour,
Her thoughts were guardless, and beyond her power;
And for one speech, and that in rashness made!
Have I no friend to soothe him and persuade?
He must not leave me—he again will come,
And we shall have one hope, one heart, one home!"

But when she heard that he on foreign ground
Sought his lost peace, hers never more was found;
But still she felt a varying hope that love
Would all these slight impediments remove.—

"Has he no friend to tell him that our pride
Resents a moment and is satisfied?
Soon as the hasty sacrifice is made,
A look will soothe us, and a tear persuade;
Have I no friend to say 'Return again,
Reveal your wishes, and relieve her pain?'"

With suffering mind the maid her prospects viewed,
That hourly varied with the varying mood;
As passed the day, the week, the month, the year,
The faint hope sickened, and gave place to fear.

No Cecil came!—"Come, peevish and unjust!"
Sad Ellen cried, "why cherish this disgust?
Thy Ellen's voice could charm thee once, but thou
Canst nothing see or hear of Ellen now!"

Yes! she was right; the grave on him was closed,
And there the lover and the friend reposed.
The news soon reached her, and she then replied
In his own manner—"I am satisfied!"

To her a lover's legacy is paid,
The darling wealth of the devoted maid;
From this her best and favourite books she buys,
From this are doled the favourite charities;
And when a tale or face affects her heart,
This is the fund that must relief impart.

Such have the ten last years of Ellen been !
Her very last that sunken eye has seen !
That half angelic being still must fade
Till all the angel in the mind be made ;
And now the closing scene will shortly come—
She cannot visit sorrow at her home ;
But still she feeds the hungry, still prepares
The usual softeners of the peasant's cares :
And though she prays not with the dying now,
She teaches them to die, and shows them how.

## SMUGGLERS AND POACHERS [1]

*(From "Tales of the Hall")*

There was a Widow in the village known
To our good Squire, and he had favour shown
By frequent bounty.—She as usual came,
And Richard saw the worn and weary frame,
Pale cheek, and eye subdued, of her whose mind
Was grateful still, and glad a friend to find,
Though to the world long since and all its hopes
resigned :

[1] Perhaps the best of the "Tales of the Hall." The story was suggested to Crabbe, his son tells us, by Sir Samuel Romilly, only six weeks before his death. Crabbe speaks of him in some memorial verses as "the best of guides to my assuming pen." It was largely due to Sir Samuel Romilly that the severity of our old penal laws—under which 200 offences were punishable by death—was mitigated, although he did not live to see the reform carried out.

Her easy form, in rustic neatness clad,
Was pleasing still, but she for ever sad.

"Deep is her grief!" said Richard,—"truly deep,
And very still, and therefore seems to sleep;
To borrow simile, to paint her woes,
Theirs, like the river's motion, seems repose,
Making no petty murmuring,—settled, slow,
They never waste, they never overflow.
Rachel is one of those—for there are some
Who look for nothing in their days to come,
No good nor evil, neither hope nor fear,
Nothing remains or cheerful or severe;
One day is like the past, the year's sweet prime
Like the sad fall,—for Rachel heeds not time:
Nothing remains to agitate her breast,
Spent is the tempest, and the sky at rest;
But while it raged her peace its ruin met,
And now the sun is on her prospects set;—
Leave her, and let us her distress explore,
She heeds it not—she has been left before."

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There were two lads called Shelley hither brought,
But whence we know not—it was never sought;
Their wandering mother left them, left her name,
And the boys throve and valiant men became:
Handsome, of more than common size, and tall,
And, no one's kindred, seemed beloved of all:

All seemed alliance by their deeds to prove,
And loved the youths who could not claim their love.
One was called James, the more sedate and grave,
The other Robert—names their neighbours gave;
They both were brave, but Robert loved to run
And meet his danger—James would rather shun
The dangerous trial, but, whenever tried,
He all his spirit to the act applied.

Robert would aid on any man bestow,
James would his man and the occasion know;
For that was quick and prompt—this temperate and slow.
Robert would all things he desired pursue,
James would consider what was best to do;
All spoke of Robert as a man they loved,
And most of James as valued and approved.

Both had some learning: Robert his acquired
By quicker parts, and was by praise inspired;
James, as he was in his acquirements slow,
Would learn the worth of what he tried to know.
In fact, this youth was generous—that was just;
The one you loved, the other you would trust:
Yet him you loved you would for truth approve,
And him you trusted you would likewise love.

Such were the brothers—James had found his way
To Nether Hall, and there inclined to stay;
He could himself command, and therefore could obey.

He with a keeper took his daily round,
A rival grew, and some unkindness found;
But his superior farmed! the place was void,
And James, guns, dogs, and dignity enjoyed.

Robert had scorn of service; he would be
A slave to no man—happy were the free,
And only they: by such opinions led,
Robert to sundry kinds of trade was bred;
Nor let us wonder if he sometimes made
An active partner in a lawless trade;
Fond of adventure, wanton as the wave,
He loved the danger and the law to brave;
But these were chance-adventures, known to few,—
Not that the hero cared what people knew.

The brothers met not often—When they met,
James talked of honest gains and scorn of debt,
Of virtuous labour, of a sober life,
And what with credit would support a wife.

But Robert answered,—"How can men advise
Who to a master let their tongue and eyes?
Whose words are not their own? whose foot and hand
Run at a nod, or act upon command?
Who cannot eat or drink, discourse or play,
Without requesting others that they may?
Debt you would shun; but what advice to give,
Who owe your service every hour you live!

Let a bell sound, and from your friends you run,
Although the darling of your heart were one;
But if the bondage fits you, I resign
You to your lot—I am content with mine!"

Thus would the lads their sentiments express,
And part in earnest, part in playfulness;
Till Love, controller of all hearts and eyes,
Breaker of bonds, of friendship's holy ties,
Awakener of new wills and slumbering sympathies,
Began his reign,—till Rachel, meek-eyed maid,
That form, those cheeks, that faultless face displayed,
That child of gracious nature, ever neat
And never fine; a floweret simply sweet,
Seeming at least unconscious she was fair;
Meek in her spirit, timid in her air,
And shrinking from his glance if one presumed
To come too near the beauty as it bloomed.

Robert beheld her in her father's cot
Day after day, and blessed his happy lot;
He looked indeed, but he could not offend
By gentle looks—he was her father's friend:
She was accustomed to that tender look,
And frankly gave the hand he fondly took;
She loved his stories, pleased she heard him play,
Pensive herself, she loved to see him gay,
And if they loved not yet, they were in Love's highway.

But Rachel now to womanhood was grown,
And would no more her faith and fondness own;

She called her latent prudence to her aid,
And grew observant, cautious, and afraid;
She heard relations of her lover's guile,
And could believe the danger of his smile;
With art insidious rival damsels strove
To show how false his speech, how feigned his love;
And though her heart another story told,
Her speech grew cautious, and her manner cold.

Rachel had village fame, was fair and tall,
And gained a place of credit at the Hall;
Where James beheld her seated in that place,
With a child's meekness, and an angel's face;
Her temper soft, her spirit firm, her words
Simple and few as simple truth affords.

James could but love her,—he at church had seen
The tall, fair maid, had met her on the green,
Admiring, always, nor surprised to find
Her figure often present to his mind;
But now he saw her daily, and the sight
Gave him new pleasure and increased delight.

But James, still prudent and reserved, though sure
The love he felt was love that would endure,
Would wait awhile, observing what was fit,
And meet, and right, nor would himself commit;
Then was he flattered—James in time became
Rich, both as slayer of the Baron's game
And as protector,—not a female dwelt
In that demesne who had not feigned or felt

Regard for James ; and he from all had praise
Enough a young man's vanity to raise ;
With all these pleasures he of course must part,
When Rachel reigned sole empress of his heart.

Robert was now deprived of that delight
He once experienced in his mistress' sight ;
For, though he now his frequent visits paid,
He saw but little of the cautious maid :
The simple common pleasures that he took
Grew dull, and he the wonted haunts forsook ;
His flute and song he left, his book and pen,
And sought the meetings of adventurous men ;
There was a love-born sadness in his breast,
That wanted stimulus to bring on rest ;
These simple pleasures were no more of use,
And danger only could repose produce ;
He joined the associates in their lawless trade,
And was at length of their profession made.

He saw connected with the adventurous crew
Those whom he judged were sober men and true ;
He found that some, who should the trade prevent,
Gave it by purchase their encouragement ;
He found that contracts could be made with those
Who had their pay these dealers to oppose ;
And the good ladies whom at church he saw
With looks devout, of reverence and awe,
Could change their feelings as they change their place,
And, whispering, deal for spicery and lace :

And thus the craft and avarice of these
Urged on the youth, and gave his conscience ease.

Him loved the maiden Rachel, fondly loved,
As many a sigh and tear in absence proved,
And many a fear for dangers that she knew,
And many a doubt what one so gay might do:
Of guilt she thought not,—she had often heard
They bought and sold, and nothing wrong appeared;
Her father's maxim this: she understood
There was some ill,—but he, she knew, was good.
It was a traffic—but was done by night—
If wrong, how trade? why secrecy, if right?
But Robert's conscience, she believed, was pure—
And that he read his Bible she was sure.

James, better taught, in confidence declared
His grief for what his guilty brother dared:
He sighed to think how near he was akin
To one reduced by godless men to sin;
Who, being always of the law in dread,
To other crimes were by the danger led—
And crimes with like excuse.—The Smuggler cries,
"What guilt is his who pays for what he buys?"
The Poacher questions, with perverted mind,
"Were not the gifts of Heaven for all designed?"

*This* cries, "I sin not—take not till I pay;"—
*That*, "My own hand brought down my proper prey:"—
And while to such fond arguments they cling,
How fear they God? how honour they the king?
Such men associate, and each other aid,
Till all are guilty, rash, and desperate made;
Till to some lawless deed the wretches fly,
And in the act, or for the acting, die.

The maid was frightened,—but, if this was true,
Robert for certain no such danger knew;
He always prayed ere he a trip began,
And was too happy for a wicked man:
How could a creature, who was always gay,
So kind to all men, so disposed to pray,—
How could he give his heart to such an evil way?
Yet she had fears,—for she could not believe
That James could lie, or purpose to deceive;
But still she found, though not without respect
For one so good, she must the man reject;
For, simple though she was, full well she knew
What this strong friendship led him to pursue;
And, let the man be honest as the light,
Love warps the mind a little from the right;
And she proposed, against the trying day,
What in the trial she should think and say.

And now, their love avowed, in both arose
Fear and disdain,—the orphan pair were foes.

Robert, more generous of the two, avowed
His scorn, defiance, and contempt aloud.

James talked of pity in a softer tone,
To Rachel speaking, and with her alone:
He knew full well, he said, to what must come
His wretched brother, what would be his doom:
Thus he her bosom fenced with dread about;
But love he could not with his skill drive out.
Still he effected something,—and that skill
Made the love wretched, though it could not kill;
And Robert failed, though much he tried, to prove
He had no guilt—she granted he had love.

Thus they proceeded, till a winter came,
When the stern keeper told of stolen game:
Throughout the woods the poaching dogs had been,
And from him nothing should the robbers screen,
From him and law,—he would all hazards run,
Nor spare a poacher, were his brother one,—
Love, favour, interest, tie of blood should fail,
Till vengeance bore him bleeding to the jail.

Poor Rachel shuddered,—smuggling she could name
Without confusion, for she felt not shame;
But poachers were her terror, and a wood
Which they frequented had been marked by blood;

And though she thought her Robert was secure
In better thoughts, yet could she not be sure.

James now was urgent,—it would break his heart
With hope, with her, and with such views to part,
When one so wicked would her hand possess,
And he a brother!—that was his distress,
And must be hers.—She heard him, and she sighed,
Looking in doubt,—but nothing she replied.
There was a generous feeling in her mind,
That told her this was neither good nor kind:
James caused her terror, but he did no more—
Her love was now as it had been before.

Their traffic failed—and the adventurous crew
No more their profitless attempts renew:
Dig they will not, and beg they might in vain,
Had they not pride, and what can then remain?

Now was the game destroyed, and not a hare
Escaped at least the danger of the snare;
Woods of their feathered beauty were bereft,
The beauteous victims of the silent theft;
The well-known shops received a large supply,
That they who could not kill at least might buy.

James was enraged, enraged his lord, and both
Confirmed their threatening with a vengeful oath:
Fresh aid was sought,—and nightly on the lands
Walked on their watch the strong, determined bands:

Pardon was offered, and a promised pay,
To him who would the desperate gang betray.
Nor failed the measure,—on a certain night
A few were seized—the rest escaped by flight;
Yet they resisted boldly ere they fled,
And blows were dealt around, and blood was shed;
Two groaning helpers on the earth were laid,
When more arrived the lawful cause to aid;
Then four determined men were seized and bound,
And Robert in this desperate number found:
In prison fettered, he deplored his fate,
And cursed the folly he perceived too late.

James was a favourite with his lord,—the zeal
He showed was such as masters ever feel:
If he for vengeance on a culprit cried,
Or if for mercy, still his lord complied;
And now, 'twas said, he will for mercy plead,
For his own brother's was the guilty deed:
True, the hurt man is in a mending way,
But must be crippled to his dying day.

Now James had vowed the law should take its course,
He would not stay it, if he did not force;
He could his witness, if he pleased, withdraw,
Or he could arm with certain death the law:[1]

[1] "Tales of the Hall" was published in 1819. Before Crabbe's death the laws relating to poaching were considerably altered—by the Night Poaching Act of 1828 and the Day Poaching Act of 1831.

This he attested to the maid, and true,
If this he could not, yet he much could do.

How suffered then that maid!—no thought she had,
No view of days to come, that was not sad;
As sad as life with all its hopes resigned,
As sad as aught but guilt can make mankind.

With bitter grief the pleasure she reviewed
Of early hope, with innocence pursued,
When she began to love, and he was fond and good.
He now must die, she heard from every tongue—
Die, and so thoughtless! perish, and so young!
Brave, kind, and generous, tender, constant, true—
And he must die—"Then will I perish too!"

A thousand acts in every age will prove
Women are valiant in a cause they love;
If fate the favoured swain in danger place,
They heed not danger—perils they embrace;
They dare the world's contempt, they brave their name's disgrace;
They on the ocean meet its wild alarms,
They search the dungeon with extended arms;
The utmost trial of their faith they prove,
And yield the lover to assert their love.

James knew his power—his feelings were not nice—
Mercy he sold, and she must pay the price:

If his good lord forbore to urge their fate,
And he the utmost of their guilt to state,
The felons might their forfeit lives redeem,
And in their country's cause regain esteem;
But never more that man, whom he had shame
To call his brother, must she see or name.

Rachel was meek, but she had firmness too,
And reasoned much on what she ought to do:
In Robert's place, she knew what she should choose—
But life was not the thing she feared to lose:
She knew that she could not their contract break,
Nor for her life a new engagement make;
But he was man, and guilty,—death so near
Might not to his as to her mind appear;
And he might wish, to spare that forfeit life,
The maid he loved might be his brother's wife,
Although that brother was his bitter foe,
And he must all the sweets of life forego.

This would she try,—intent on this alone,
She could assume a calm and settled tone:
She spake with firmness,—"I will Robert see,
Know what he wishes, and what I must be;"
For James had now discovered to the maid
His inmost heart, and how he must be paid,
If he his lord would soften, and would hide
The facts that must the culprit's fate decide.
"Go not," he said,—for she her full intent
Proclaimed—to go she purposed, and she went:
She took a guide, and went with purpose stern
The secret wishes of her friend to learn.

She saw him fettered, full of grief, alone,
Still as the dead, and he suppressed a groan
At her appearance.—Now she prayed for strength;
And the sad couple could converse at length.
It was a scene that shook her to repeat,—
Life fought with love, both powerful, and both sweet.

"Wilt thou die, Robert, or preserve thy life?
Shall I be thine own maid, or James's wife?"

"His wife!—No!—never will I thee resign—
No, Rachel, no!"—"Then am I ever thine:
I know thee rash and guilty,—but to thee
I pledged my vow, and thine will ever be.
Yet think again,—the life that God has lent
Is thine, but not to cast away—consent,
If 'tis thy wish; for this I made my way
To thy distress—command, and I obey."

"Perhaps my brother may have gained thy heart?"
"Then why this visit, if I wished to part?
Was it—ah, man ungrateful!—wise to make
Effort like this, to hazard for thy sake
A spotless reputation, and to be
A suppliant to that stern man for thee!
But I forgive,—thy spirit has been tried,
And thou art weak, but still thou must decide.

"I asked thy brother James, wouldst thou command,
Without the loving heart, the obedient hand?

I ask thee, Robert, lover, canst thou part
With this poor hand, when master of the heart?—
He answered, Yes!—I tarry thy reply,
Resigned with him to live, content with thee to die."

Assured of this, with spirits low and tame,
Here life so purchased—there a death of shame;
Death once his merriment, but now his dread,
And he with terror thought upon the dead:
"O! sure 'tis better to endure the care
And pain of life, than go we know not where:—
And is there not the dreaded hell for sin,
Or is it only this I feel within?
That, if it lasted, no man would sustain,
But would by any change relieve the pain:
Forgive me, love! it is a loathsome thing
To live not thine; but still this dreaded sting
Of death torments me,—I to nature cling.
Go, and be his—but love him not, be sure—
Go, love him not,—and I will life endure:
He, too, is mortal!"—Rachel deeply sighed,
But would no more converse: she had complied,
And was no longer free—she was his brother's bride.

"Farewell!" she said, with kindness, but not fond,
Feeling the pressure of the recent bond,
And put her tenderness apart to give
Advice to one who so desired to live:
She then departed, joined the attending guide,
Reflected—wept—was sad—was satisfied.

James on her worth and virtue could depend,—
He listened gladly to her story's end:
Again he promised Robert's life to save,
And claimed the hand that she in payment gave.

Robert, when death no longer was in view,
Scorned what was done, but could not this undo:
The day appointed for the trial near
He viewed with shame, and not unmixed with fear:
James might deceive him; and, if not, the schemes
Of men may fail.—"Can I depend on James?"

He might; for now the grievous price was paid—
James to the altar led the victim maid,
And gave the trembling girl his faithful word
For Robert's safety, and so gave my lord.

But this, and all the promise hope could give,
Gilded not life,—it was not joy to live;
There was no smile in Rachel, nothing gay,
The hours passed off, but never danced away.
When drew the gloomy day for trial near,
There came a note to Robert,—"Banish fear!"

He knew whence safety came,—his terror fled,
But rage and vengeance filled his soul instead.

A stronger fear in his companions rose—
The day of trial on their hopes might close:

They had no brothers, none to intercede
For them, their friends suspected, and in need;
Scattered, they judged, and could unite no more,—
Not so,—they then were at the prison door.

For some had met who sought the haunts they loved,
And were to pity and to vengeance moved:
Their fellows perish? and they see their fall?—
Why not attempt the steep but guardless wall?

Attempt was made, his part assigned each man,
And they succeeded in the desperate plan;
In truth, a purposed mercy smoothed their way,
But that they knew not—all triumphant they.
Safe in their well-known haunts, they all prepared
To plan anew, and show how much they dared.

With joy the troubled heart of Robert beat,
For life was his, and liberty was sweet;
He looked around in freedom—in delight?
O! no—his Rachel was another's right!
"Right!—has he then preserved me in the day
Of my distress?—He has the lovely pay!
But I no freedom at the slave's request,—
The price I paid shall then be repossessed!
Alas! her virtue and the law prevent,
Force cannot be, and she will not consent;
But were that brother gone!—A brother? No!
A circumventor!—and the wretch shall go!

Yet not this hand—How shifts about my mind,
Ungoverned, guideless, drifting in the wind!
And I am all a tempest, whirled around
By dreadful thoughts, that fright me and confound.
I would I saw him on the earth laid low!
I wish the fate, but must not give the blow!"

So thinks a man when thoughtful; he prefers
A life of peace till man his anger stirs,
Then all the efforts of his reason cease,
And he forgets how pleasant was that peace;
Till the wild passions what they seek obtain,
And then he sinks into his calm again.

Now met the lawless clan,—in secret met,
And down at their convivial board were set;
The plans in view to past adventures led,
And the past conflicts present anger bred;
They sighed for pleasures gone, they groaned for heroes dead:
Their ancient stores were rifled,—strong desires
Awaked, and wine rekindled latent fires.

It was a night such bold desires to move,
Strong winds and wintry torrents filled the grove;
The crackling boughs that in the forest fell,
The cawing rooks, the cur's affrightened yell,
The scenes above the wood, the floods below,
Were mixed, and none the single sound could know;
"Loud blow the blasts," they cried, "and call us as they blow."

In such a night—and then the heroes told
What had been done in better times of old;
How they had conquered all opposed to them,
By force in part, in part by stratagem;
And as the tales inflamed the fiery crew,
What had been done they then prepared to do;
"'Tis a last night!" they said—the angry blast
And roaring floods seemed answering, "'Tis a last!"

James knew they met, for he had spies about,
Grave, sober men, whom none presumed to doubt!
For if suspected, they had soon been tried
Where fears are evidence, and doubts decide:
But these escaped.—Now James companions took,
Sturdy and bold, with terror-stirring look:
He had before, by informations led,
Left the afflicted partner of his bed:
Awaked his men, and through plantations wide,
Deep woods, and trackless ling, had been their guide:
And then returned to wake the pitying wife,
And hear her tender terrors for his life.

But in this night a sure informer came,—
They were assembled who attacked his game;
Who more than once had through the park made way,
And slain the dappled breed, or vowed to slay;
The trembling spy had heard the solemn vow,
And need and vengeance both inspired them now.

The keeper early had retired to rest
For brief repose; sad thoughts his mind possessed:
In his short sleep he started from his bed,
And asked in fancy's terror, "Is he dead?"
There was a call below, when James awoke,
Rose from his bed, and arms to aid him took,
Not all defensive!—there his helpers stood,
Armed like himself, and hastening to the wood.

"Why this?" he said; for Rachel poured her tears
Profuse, that spoke involuntary fears:
"Sleep, that so early thou for us mayst wake,
And we our comforts in return may take;
Sleep, and farewell!" he said, and took his way,
And the sad wife in neither could obey;
She slept not nor well fared, but restless dwelt
On her past life, and past afflictions felt:
The man she loved, the brother and the foe
Of him she married!—It had wrought her woe;
Not that she loved, but pitied, and that now
Was, so she feared, infringement of her vow:
James too was civil, though she must confess
That his was not her kind of happiness:
That he would shoot the man who shot a hare,
Was what her timid conscience could not bear;
But still she loved him — wondered where he strayed
In this loud night, and if he were afraid.

More than one hour she thought, and, dropping then
In sudden sleep, cried loudly, "Spare him, men!

And do no murder!"—then awaked she rose,
And thought no more of trying for repose.

'Twas past the dead of night, when every sound
That nature mingles might be heard around;
But none from man,—man's feeble voice was hushed,
Where rivers swelling roared, and woods were crushed;
Hurried by these, the wife could sit no more,
But must the terrors of the night explore.

Softly she left her door, her garden gate,
And seemed as then committed to her fate:
To every horrid thought and doubt a prey,
She hurried on, already lost her way:
Oft as she glided on in that sad night,
She stopped to listen, and she looked for light;
An hour she wandered, and was still to learn
Aught of her husband's safety or return:
A sudden break of heavy clouds could show
A place she knew not, but she strove to know:
Still further on she crept with trembling feet,
With hope a friend, with fear a foe to meet;
And there was something fearful in the sight
And in the sound of what appeared to-night;
For now, of night and nervous terror bred,
Arose a strong and superstitious dread;
She heard strange noises, and the shapes she saw
Of fancied beings bound her soul in awe.

The moon was risen, and she sometimes shone
Through thick white clouds, that flew tumultuous on,

Passing beneath her with an eagle's speed,
That her soft light imprisoned and then freed:
The fitful glimmering through the hedge-row green
Gave a strange beauty to the changing scene;
And roaring winds and rushing waters lent
Their mingled voice that to the spirit went.

To these she listened; but new sounds were heard,
And sight more startling to her soul appeared;
There were low lengthened tones with sobs between,
And near at hand, but nothing yet was seen;
She hurried on, and "Who is there?" she cried,—
"A dying wretch!" was from the earth replied.

It was her lover—was the man she gave,
The price she paid, himself from death to save;
With whom, expiring, she must kneel and pray,
While the soul flitted from the shivering clay
That pressed the dewy ground, and bled its life away!
This was the part that duty bade her take,
Instant and ere her feelings were awake;
But now they waked to anguish: there came then,
Hurrying with lights, loud-speaking, eager men.

"And here, my lord, we met—And who is here?
The keeper's wife!—Ah! woman, go not near!

There lies the man who was the head of all—
See, in his temples went the fatal ball!
And James that instant, who was then our guide,
Felt in his heart the adverse shot, and died!
It was a sudden meeting, and the light
Of a dull moon made indistinct our fight;
He foremost fell!—But see, the woman creeps
Like a lost thing, that wanders as she sleeps.
See, here her husband's body—but she knows
That other dead, and that her action shows.
Rachel! why look you at your mortal foe?
She does not hear us—Whither will she go?"

Now, more attentive, on the dead they gazed,
And they were brothers: sorrowing and amazed,
On all a momentary silence came,
A common softness, and a moral shame.

"Seized you the poachers?" said my lord.
—"They fled,
And we pursued not—one of them was dead,
And one of us: they hurried through the wood,
Two lives were gone, and we no more pursued.
Two lives of men, of valiant brothers, lost!
Enough, my lord, do hares and pheasants cost!"

So many thought, and there is found a heart
To dwell upon the deaths on either part;
Since this their morals have been more correct,
The cruel spirit in the place is checked;
His lordship holds not in such sacred care,
Nor takes such dreadful vengeance for a hare;
The smugglers fear, the poacher stands in awe
Of Heaven's own act, and reverence the law;

There was, there is, a terror in the place
That operates on man's offending race;
Such acts will stamp their moral on the soul,
And, while the bad they threaten and control,
Will to the pious and the humble say,
Yours is the right, the safe, the certain way;
'Tis wisdom to be good, 'tis virtue to obey.

So Rachel thinks, the pure, the good, the meek,
Whose outward acts the inward purpose speak;
As men will children at their sports behold,
And smile to see them, though unmoved and cold,
Smile at the recollected games, and then
Depart and mix in the affairs of men:
So Rachel looks upon the world, and sees
It cannot longer pain her, longer please,
But just detain the passing thought, or cause
A gentle smile of pity or applause;
And then the recollected soul repairs
Her slumbering hope, and heeds her own affairs.

## THE ANCIENT MANSION[1]

*(From "Posthumous Tales")*

### Part I.—The Farewell

To part is painful; nay, to bid adieu
E'en to a favourite spot is painful too.
That fine old Seat, with all those oaks around,
Oft have I viewed with reverence so profound,
As something sacred dwelt in that delicious ground.

There, with its tenantry about, reside
A genuine English race, the country's pride;
And now a Lady, last of all that race,
Is the departing spirit of the place.
Hers is the last of all that noble blood,
That flowed through generations brave and good;
And if there dwells a native pride in her,
It is the pride of name and character.

True, she will speak, in her abundant zeal,
Of stainless honour; that she needs must feel;
She must lament that she is now the last
Of all who gave such splendour to the past.

[1] The "Posthumous Tales" were first published in 1834, two years after Crabbe's death. The Tale here given is considerably the best of them, and the lyric with which it ends shows conclusively how great might have been Crabbe's success outside the narrow limits of the heroic style and metre.

Still are her habits of the ancient kind;
She knows the poor, the sick, the lame, the blind:
She holds, so she believes, her wealth in trust;
And being kind, with her, is being just.
Though soul and body she delights to aid,
Yet of her skill she's prudently afraid:
So to her chaplain's care she *this* commends,
And when *that* craves, the village doctor sends.

At church attendance she requires of all
Who would be held in credit at the Hall;
A due respect to each degree she shows,
And pays the debt that every mortal owes;
'Tis by opinion that respect is led,
The rich esteem because the poor are fed.

Her servants all, if so we may describe
That ancient, grave, observant, decent tribe,
Who with her share the blessings of the Hall,
Are kind but grave, are proud but courteous all—
Proud of their lucky lot! Behold, how stands
That grey-haired butler, waiting her commands;
The Lady dines, and every day he feels
That his good mistress falters in her meals.
With what respectful manners he entreats
That she would eat—yet Jacob little eats;
When she forbears, his supplicating eye
Entreats the noble dame once more to try.
Their years the same; and he has never known
Another place; and this he deems his own,—
All appertains to him. Whate'er he sees
Is *ours!*—"our house, our land, our walks, our trees!"

But still he fears the time is just at hand
When he no more shall in that presence stand;
And he resolves, with mingled grief and pride,
To serve no being in the world beside.
"He has enough," he says, with many a sigh,
"For him to serve his God, and learn to die:
He and his lady shall have heard their call,
And the new folk, the strangers, may have all."

But, leaving these to their accustomed way,
The Seat itself demands a short delay.
We all have interest there—the trees that grow
Near to that seat, to that their grandeur owe;
They take, but largely pay, and equal grace bestow:
They hide a part, but still the part they shade
Is more inviting to our fancy made;
And, if the eye be robbed of half its sight,
Th' imagination feels the more delight.
These giants oaks by no man's order stand;
Heaven did the work; by no man was it planned.

Here I behold no puny works of art,
None give me reasons why these views impart
Such charm to fill the mind, such joy to swell the heart.
These very pinnacles, and turrets small,
And windows dim, have beauty in them all.
How stately stand yon pines upon the hill,
How soft the murmurs of that living rill!
And o'er the park's tall paling, scarcely higher,
Peeps the low Church and shows the modest spire.
Unnumbered violets on those banks appear,
And all the first-born beauties of the year.

The grey-green blossoms of the willows bring
The large wild bees upon the labouring wing;
Then comes the Summer with augmented pride,
Whose pure small streams along the valleys glide:
Her richer Flora their brief charm display,
And, as the fruit advances, fall away.
Then shall the autumnal yellow clothe the leaf,
What time the reaper binds the burdened sheaf:
Then silent groves denote the dying year,
The morning frost, and noontide gossamer;
And all be silent in the scene around,
All save the distant sea's uncertain sound,
Or here and there the gun whose loud report
Proclaims to man that Death is but his sport.
And then the wintry winds begin to blow,
Then fall the flaky stars of gathering snow,
When on the thorn the ripening sloe, yet blue,
Takes the bright varnish of the morning dew;
The aged moss grows brittle on the pale,
The dry boughs splinter in the windy gale,
And every changing season of the year
Stamps on the scene its English character.

Farewell! a prouder Mansion I may see,
But much must meet in that which equals thee!

## Part II.—The Return

I leave the town, and take a well-known way,
To that old mansion in the closing day,
When beams of golden light are shed around,
And sweet is every sight and every sound.

Pass but this hill, and I shall then behold
The Seat so honoured, so admired of old,
And yet admired——

Alas! I see a change,
Of odious kind, and lamentably strange.
Who had done this? The good old Lady lies
Within her tomb; but who could this advise?
What barbarous hand could all this mischief do,
And spoil a noble house to make it new?
Who had done this? Some genuine Son of Trade
Has all this dreadful devastation made;
Some man with line and rule, and evil eye,
Who could no beauty in a tree descry,
Save in a clump, when stationed by his hand,
And standing where his genius bade them stand;
Some true admirer of the time's reform,
Who strips an ancient dwelling like a storm,
Strips it of all its dignity and grace,
To put his own dear fancies in their place.
He hates concealment: all that was enclosed
By venerable wood is now exposed,
And a few stripling elms and oaks appear,
Fenced round by boards to keep them from the deer.

I miss the grandeur of the rich old scene,
And see not what these clumps and patches mean!
This shrubby belt that runs the land around
Shuts freedom out! what being likes a bound?
The shrubs indeed, and ill-placed flowers, are gay,
And some would praise; I wish they were away,

That in the wild-wood maze I as of old might
stray.
The things themselves are pleasant to behold,
But not like those which we beheld of old,—
That half-hid mansion, with its wide domain,
Unbound and unsubdued !—but sighs are vain ;
It is the rage of Taste—the rule and compass
reign.

As thus my spleen upon the view I fed,
A man approached me, by his grandchild led—
A blind old man, and she a fair young maid,
Listening in love to what her grandsire said.

And thus with gentle voice he spoke—
"Come lead me, lassie, to the shade,
Where willows grow beside the brook ;
For well I know the sound it made,
When, dashing o'er the stony rill,
It murmured to St Osyth's Mill."

The Lass replied—"The trees are fled,
They've cut the brook a straighter bed :
No shades the present lords allow,
The miller only murmurs now ;
The waters now his mill forsake,
And form a pond they call a lake."

"Then, lassie, lead thy grandsire on,
And to the holy water bring ;
A cup is fastened to the stone,
And I would taste the healing spring,
That soon its rocky cist forsakes,
And green its mossy passage makes."

"The holy spring is turned aside,
The rock is gone, the stream is dried;
The plough has levelled all around,
And here is now no holy ground."

"Then, lass, thy grandsire's footsteps guide
To Bulmer's Tree, the giant oak,
Whose boughs the keeper's cottage hide,
And part the church-way lane o'erlook;
A boy, I climbed the topmost bough,
And I would feel its shadow now.

"Or, lassie, lead me to the west,
Where grew the elm-trees thick and tall,
Where rooks unnumbered build their nest—
Deliberate birds, and prudent all:
Their notes, indeed, are harsh and rude,
But they're a social multitude."

"The rooks are shot, the trees are felled,
And nest and nursery all expelled;
With better fate, the giant-tree,
Old Bulmer's Oak, is gone to sea.
The church-way walk is now no more,
And men must other ways explore:
Though this indeed promotion gains,
For this the park's new wall contains;
And here I fear we shall not meet
A shade—although, perchance, a seat."

"O then, my lassie, lead the way
To Comfort's Home, the ancient inn;
That something holds, if we can pay—
Old David is our living kin;

A servant once, he still preserves
His name, and in his office serves."

"Alas! that mine should be the fate
Old David's sorrows to relate:
But they were brief: not long before
He died, his office was no more.
The kennel stands upon the ground,
With something of the former sound."

"O then," the grieving Man replied,
"No further, lassie, let me stray;
Here's nothing left of ancient pride,
Of what was grand, of what was gay:
But all is changed, is lost, is sold—
All, all that's left is chilling cold.
I seek for comfort here in vain,
Then lead me to my cot again."

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